

THE NATION

AND ATHENÆUM

VOLUME XLV - - - No. 18
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SATURDAY, AUGUST 3rd, 1929.

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THE COTTON DISPUTE

LABOUR'S FOREIGN POLICY ... H. WILSON HARRIS

THE CARE OF INLAND WATERS

THE DECLINE OF FICTION ... STORM JAMESON



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A*

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AND ATHENÆUM



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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE continued outflow of gold to France on a really formidable scale is a phenomenon of the first public importance and raises questions which deserve immediate attention. At present gold is being taken to France as fast as it is technically feasible for the French to receive it, and there is no sign that the movement is nearing its end. How will the Bank of England react to this movement if it persists? It has shown by its actions so far that it would be very reluctant to raise Bank rate; for it has taken steps to avoid a contraction of credit by buying securities to replace the gold it has lost. But meanwhile, the Bank's so-called "reserve" is falling rapidly; and it would need only a few weeks more of the present rate of outflow to reduce the reserve to dangerously low dimensions. There is indeed one fairly simple expedient by which this difficulty could be circumvented. Advantage could be taken of Clause 8 of the Currency Act of last year to increase the fiduciary note issue; and, since we were officially assured when the Act was passed that this clause was intended for use in just such an emergency as the present, there would seem to be an overwhelming case for applying this expedient, if it proves to be the only alternative to an increase in Bank rate.

* * *

Mr. Snowden in his speech last week at the Mansion House showed his sense of the dangers of the situation by appealing to City houses to be cautious about lending to countries where sterling is at a discount; and he proceeded to express his "hope" that we shall be able to tide over the present situation without an increase in Bank rate. Mr. Snowden's speech was altogether an extremely tactful one. He asked the bankers for

their confidence, declaring confidence to be "absolutely essential." He spoke of the duty of the Government "not to aggravate the situation by political passions." And he regretted that he could hold out "very little hope of any reduction in the total of taxation in the immediate year." Incidentally, he spoke of our "quixotic generosity" in the matter of debts and reparations, and his observations on this question both at the Mansion House and in the House of Commons next day suggest that he would strongly resist an integral acceptance of the Young Report.

* * *

There is an undeniable element of comedy in the new attitude of Labour Ministers towards the unemployment figures. In Opposition, the Labour Party were quite unreasonably derisive whenever Conservative Ministers endeavoured to point out that while unemployment might not have diminished, the total volume of employment had substantially increased. Nor had they any patience with attempts to explain the unemployment figures away by pointing out that the bulk of those on the register were unemployed for short periods only. It is common, of course, for parties to change their tone when they cross the floor of the House, but they do not usually do so with quite the same naïveté that the Labour Government are displaying on this matter. In almost his first speech as Lord Privy Seal, we find Mr. Thomas explaining elaborately, as though it was a new point which no one had made before, that there is *not* a standing army of a million unemployed, that most of those registered get work within a week, &c., &c. And now we have an announcement issued by Miss Bondfield, to the effect that she would like to discontinue publishing the weekly unemployment figures, because they are so apt to be misinter-

preted abroad, that she will not do so for fear lest her action might be misinterpreted at home, but that she will supplement the weekly figures with a new monthly statement estimating the number of persons employed. There is in all this, as we have said, a decided element of comedy. But there is a serious aspect too. It is difficult to reconcile this nervousness with a serious expectation of mastering unemployment.

The promised discussion of Egyptian affairs took place in the House of Commons on July 26th. Some fuller statement of the Government's attitude was inevitable, after the scene which followed the announcement of Lord Lloyd's resignation, but the attitude of the Opposition, and of Mr. Winston Churchill in particular, gave the debate a painful and a mischievous turn. Mr. Baldwin, who raised the question on the adjournment, forebore to make bad worse by a demand that papers should be laid, and his speech was mainly devoted to warning the Government, rather portentously, of the ill consequences that might attend a purely hypothetical change in their Egyptian policy; but he pressed for further details of the reasons for which Lord Lloyd's resignation was required, and Mr. Henderson was compelled to unravel, at length and in detail, the tale of the High Commissioner's differences with the late Government. Mr. Churchill carefully avoided his leader's propriety of manner. He asserted that Lord Lloyd had been sacrificed because he refused to lend himself to "sloppy surrender to sentiment," and went out of his way to make a gratuitous attack on the truth and fairness of the Foreign Office officials, based, as Mr. MacDonald scathingly remarked, on the "most contemptible tittle-tattle of the clubs." Mr. MacDonald reiterated the continuity of the Government's Egyptian policy, and the debate lapsed.

The Government's conduct, and the wisdom of the Opposition in forcing a debate, must both be judged in the light of existing circumstances. Up to the date of the election the last Government were discussing a settlement of the reserved points in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty with the Government of Egypt. The Egyptian Premier's visit to London gave new life to the negotiation, and it is admitted by the Foreign Office that the heads of a projected agreement have been drafted and are under discussion. A forecast appearing in an Egyptian paper states that Great Britain is making certain substantial concessions, including the withdrawal of the British Army in Egypt to the Canal Zone. This is almost certainly premature, for Mr. MacDonald has definitely stated that the question of British communications is at present under consideration by the heads of the three Service Departments, and that all other points of difficulty are being treated in the same cautious way. Both Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Henderson were emphatic that no agreement would be signed which embodied, in principle, any departure from the Declaration of 1922. Mr. Henderson further stated that the Government would consult the Dominions before signing any agreement, and that no agreement would be put into operation "until it has been submitted for the approval of the Egyptian people"—which means presumably that Mahmoud Pasha will have to restore constitutional rights and summon an Egyptian Parliament.

Now, what was Lord Lloyd's position? Mr. Henderson revealed that on five crucial points—the resumption of office by Zaghlul, the compulsory retention of British officials in Egyptian Departments, the

Egyptian Army crisis, the Assemblies Bill crisis, and the new taxes on British subjects in Egypt—Lord Lloyd's views differed strongly from those of Sir Austen Chamberlain; always in the direction of more drastic intervention in Egyptian affairs. There was no question of his sincerity, or of the loyalty with which he carried out the Government's policy on occasions when he was overruled. His criticisms never exceeded the frankness properly demanded from the man on the spot. But he was clearly completely out of sympathy with the general line of the Government's policy, which the new Government desires to continue, if not to carry further. He is regarded alike by the Egyptian people, by the British colony in Egypt, and by both his admirers and his critics at home as an advocate of the strong hand in Egypt, a rigid rather than a liberal interpretation of the Declaration of 1922, and naval demonstrations as an instrument of negotiation. In the circumstances the Government were entitled to consider that his presence in Cairo would not be helpful to very delicate negotiations, the success of which will involve a restoration of the Egyptian Constitution. Lord Lloyd himself had apparently acquiesced in their decision with propriety and good temper. It is not clear that they gave effect to that decision in the best possible way; but the chief blame for a dangerous episode must attach to the very ill-judged intervention of Lord Lloyd's Tory admirers.

A dispute over fishing rights in Lough Foyle seems likely to cause a serious crisis in the relations between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. A company domiciled in Northern Ireland holds a lease of the fishing rights, and the Northern Courts have recently issued an injunction against certain Donegal fishermen who have been fishing in the Lough. The legality of this injunction is denied by the Free State lawyers, who argue that, under the Treaty of 1921, the Free State is defined as all Ireland, with the territorial waters thereto appertaining, and that neither the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, which defines the Northern Irish State, nor the clause in the Treaty which gave the six counties the right to "opt out," makes any specific mention of territorial waters. The controversy is rendered particularly dangerous by the Free State's objection to acknowledging the jurisdiction of the Privy Council—which by constitutional procedure ought to settle the dispute. The Free State Government are reported to contemplate an appeal to the British Government to support their claims, and failing satisfaction, a reference to the International Court. Meanwhile, there is more immediate danger in the fact that members of Dail Eireann from Donegal are urging their Government to give armed protection to the fishermen against whom the injunction has been granted.

Meanwhile, the attitude of the Irish Free State Government towards the right of appeal to the Privy Council, to which Messrs. Syrett and Sons called attention in a letter in our issue of July 20th, raises questions of considerable interest and importance. An appeal is pending from the Supreme Court of the Irish Free State to the Privy Council, in which the question at issue is whether or not the Imperial Copyright Act of 1911 was in force in Ireland from the date when the Treaty came into operation in March, 1922, until the passing by the Irish Parliament of a Copyright Act in 1927. While this appeal is awaiting a hearing, the Free State Government have introduced a Bill which declares that the copyright law was as the appellants contend during the period in question, but which contains a clause depriving the appellants of any relief by

way of damages, injunction, or costs. In supporting the Bill, Mr. McGilligan, the Minister for External Affairs, said that it was the Government's intention to get rid of the Royal Prerogative in respect of Privy Council appeals. This raises a constitutional question of wide application, since the Treaty definitely preserved the right of appeal to the Privy Council, and this forms one of the few definite links between Great Britain and the Dominions. It should be noted, however, that at the Imperial Conference of 1926 the question of these appeals was raised by the Irish Free State, and the British Government took the line that if a Dominion chose to abrogate the right of appeal it was not for this country to offer strong opposition.

* * *

M. Briand has succeeded M. Poincaré as Premier of France in circumstances which can give him little pleasure in the office. Having ratified the debt agreements with the United States and Great Britain, the Chamber proceeded, characteristically, to throw out—by 390 votes to 200—the Ways and Means Bill by which provision would be made for payments. On the following day the Senate ratified the agreements, without legal reservation; but passed a resolution embodying moral reservations rather more drastic than those of the Chamber. The votes in the Senate, however, were thrown into the shade by the announcement that M. Poincaré had resigned, having been ordered by his doctors to undergo a surgical operation, and take three or four months' complete rest. The entire Government promptly resigned, and M. Briand, who accepted the Premiership, set to work to form a Cabinet, for which he endeavoured to secure the support of the Radical-Socialist Group. The offer of two Under-Secretaryships, however, was not sufficient to wean the Radical-Socialists from their desire for freedom of action in domestic affairs, as soon as the Reparations Conference is over, and M. Briand eventually had to fall back on the reappointment of all M. Poincaré's Ministers to their old posts—he himself retaining the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

* * *

In the circumstances, M. Briand must be regarded as the head of a stop-gap Government, holding office for the sole purpose of providing for adequate French representation at the Reparations Conference, the venue of which has now been definitely fixed at the Hague. The attitude of the Chamber, and of the Senate, towards the debt agreements, do not hold out very bright prospects for the success of the Conference. It is clear that the French Government will be expected to take an extremely strong line, both on Reparations and on the Rhineland, as some compensation for the sacrifice made by France in consenting to honour her signature. The French Press is already extremely alarmed at a promise, secured from Mr. Snowden by Mr. Lloyd George, during the debate on the adjournment, that British interests should not be lost sight of at the Conference, which the *JOURNAL DES DÉBATS* interprets as implying that France will have to defend herself not only against German demands but "against the appetites of the British Labour Party."

* * *

The state of affairs in Manchuria is still critical. Although both the Chinese and the Russian Governments have denied all bellicose intentions, no definite step appears to have been taken towards opening negotiations for a settlement. Meanwhile the situation is such that those who are endeavouring to bring the two Governments together ought to lose no time. The Chinese and Russian armies are reported to be about

twenty miles apart, which is a factor of safety; but both forces are spread over a wide front, and the communications are poor. The corps commanders are not in touch with one another, and any one of them may act independently at a moment's notice. Wild rumours of the kind that are apt to precipitate ill-advised military movements are pouring in to both sides. A report that the Russians are inciting a Mongol horde to raid the Chinese communications is the latest of these disturbing rumours. If diplomatic negotiations are delayed, it is a matter of vital importance that the Chinese and Russian Headquarters Staffs should get into touch.

* * *

By the death of Mr. Havelock Wilson, the National Union of Seamen were deprived not only of their President but of a dominating personality who had for many years controlled the policy of the Union and severely repressed all who had ventured to differ from him. Mr. Wilson was, in fact, a dictator, and it is a commonplace that dictators are difficult to replace. The National Union of Seamen have decided not to attempt, for the present at any rate, to replace Mr. Wilson. The Presidency is to be in commission; the functions of a President having been assigned to a committee. There are already signs of modification in the policy of the Seamen's Union. Through the good offices of Commander Kenworthy conferences have been taking place between the Seamen and the Transport and General Workers' Union at which agreement has been reached on all the issues between the two organizations. This implies that the Transport Workers will abandon their attempt to build up a maritime section of their Union, and that the Seamen's Union will withdraw their support of the "non-political" miners' organizations and other bodies hostile to the industrial Labour Movement. The way will thus be paved for the readmission of the National Union of Seamen to the Trades Union Congress, from which it was expelled last autumn. It will be interesting to observe the effect of these developments upon the close relations which Mr. Wilson established between his Union and the ship-owners.

* * *

The Boy Scout Movement has begun to celebrate its twenty-first birthday this week by a "Jamboree" at Arrowe Park, near Birkenhead, where fifty thousand Scouts have assembled from all parts of the British Empire and from forty-one separate nations. Even this vast gathering contains only one-fortieth of the Association it represents. The Movement has grown so rapidly that its best friends—even the Chief Scout himself—might fear lest it should grow out of control and lose sight of its original purpose and inspiration. It is fortunate, indeed, that Sir Robert Baden-Powell has been able to impress his personal influence on the Association throughout this critical period of its growth. His clear conception of the object in view and his generous ideals have so far saved the Boy Scouts from the dangers which beset them. The most obvious of these is that, in teaching "the young idea to shoot," a taste for military glory should be inculcated. This the Chief Scout has been always on the alert to avoid. A subtler danger is that the Movement may mistake vastness of organization for living growth, and become mechanical. Constant vigilance, and an eagerness to give full scope to active reformers with new ideas within the Movement will be necessary if this too is to be avoided. The vigour shown in the World Jamboree at Arrowe Park shows that it is at least being kept at bay.

THE COTTON DISPUTE

IT is reassuring, on the whole, that the eleventh-hour negotiations in the cotton industry went as far as they did towards resolving the deadlock. The chance of averting a stoppage altogether was never a good one. The vital question is whether the stoppage will be short or long. The damage done by a labour conflict to the interests of an industry increases progressively with its duration. Lancashire can sustain a stoppage of two or three weeks without, we may hope, any serious lasting injury to her trade; but if the dispute were to be fought out with the obstinacy which is normal in the coal industry, she might lose trade which it would take years of laborious effort to recover. Fortunately, the traditions of cotton have nothing in common with those of coal. The leaders of the employers' and operatives' organizations in Lancashire are, in many ways, stubborn men. They pride themselves on a blunt demeanour; they are unduly fond of a "take it or leave it" attitude; and, being supremely indifferent to the opinions of the outside world, they are not easy men for a helpful Ministry of Labour to persuade or cajole. But they are, on both sides, realists, with no taste whatever for that propagandist militancy which is so popular and has proved so disastrous in the coalfields. It is, for example, almost impossible to imagine Mr. Cook as a prominent trade-union leader in the cotton trade.

What is even more important, the cotton employers and operatives are largely agreed on fundamentals. Hitherto, indeed, the principles by which wages questions should be determined have been common ground to the two sides. That wages should be related to the state of trade, that they should go up when trade is good, and, conversely, that they must come down when trade is bad—until very recently, no one in Lancashire would have thought of challenging these propositions. They were taken for granted. You might argue fiercely as to whether trade was as good or as bad as it was represented to be; you might haggle stubbornly as to the less or the more by which wages should be put up or put down; and disputes of this character might carry you up to the very edge of a conflict. But when all that was at issue was the precise terms of a bargain, it was usually possible to effect a settlement at the last moment. The peculiarity of the present dispute which has made it impossible to avert a stoppage is that the operatives have come to doubt the validity of the principles which have hitherto been regarded throughout the cotton trade as obvious common sense.

From the standpoint of these traditional principles, the employers have obviously a strong case in demanding a substantial cut in wages. Trade is very bad, and shows no signs of recovery; the financial position of the industry is notoriously desperate. Moreover, although the earnings of the operatives are, in view of the prevalence of short time, wretched enough, the trouble lies more with the short time than with the wage rates, which are about 86 per cent. above the pre-war level. In these circumstances, had it not been for the change of ideas to which we have referred, it is probable that the operatives' leaders would have accepted the employers' contention that wages must

come down without much argument, and would have devoted the past month to a prolonged process of haggling, from which an agreed reduction would eventually have emerged.

Recent developments have, however, bred in the minds of the operatives, and not in their minds alone, a new scepticism as to the expediency, under such conditions as obtain to-day, of meeting bad trade by wage reductions. It must be remembered that wages form only a comparatively small proportion of the costs of producing cotton cloth. The cut demanded by the employers, drastic though it is from the operatives' standpoint, could not, therefore, make a very considerable difference to the selling price of cloth. The difference would amount to from about 2 to 3 per cent., according to the variety of cloth. Would such a reduction really serve to set the cotton industry again upon its feet, to bring back lost markets, and to enable full-time working to be restored? The employers profess to believe that it would; but do they really believe this in their hearts? Of course, Lancashire is accustomed to working on small margins; and no one in pre-war days would have ventured to cast doubts on the crucial importance of 2 or 3 per cent.; but to-day there is uncertainty and perplexity on many matters where confident dogmatism formerly reigned supreme.

This uncertainty is closely connected with the widespread conviction that before the industry can be restored to a satisfactory condition its organization must first be radically overhauled. A reorganized and financially healthy industry might possibly succeed, by cutting costs vigorously and comprehensively, on the one hand, and by spending capital freely, on the other hand, on improved machinery, such as the automatic loom, in recapturing a large part of the trade that has been lost. But it is idle to hope for any such brilliant results from the present organization of the industry, no matter how much wages are reduced. It is possible, indeed, that the savings resulting from lower wages may be largely dissipated in ways which will neither relieve the financial difficulties of the industry nor increase its competitive power.

This, at any rate, is the view which is widely held, and has been freely expressed, by intelligent observers outside the cotton industry; and the cotton employers, in making their present demands, have had accordingly a bad Press. The *Times*, for example, has been dead against them. No paper has asserted more emphatically or more persistently the thesis that reorganization is the primary need of the cotton industry and that it is futile to press for wage reductions until reorganization has been effected. It is not in the least surprising, therefore, that the cotton operatives should have taken a similar line, and that they should have replied to the employers' demand by suggesting that the question should be deferred, pending the inquiry which the Government are instituting into the affairs of the industry.

The cause for surprise is rather that the operatives should have departed so soon from this attitude. During the discussions which took place last week on the intervention of the Ministry of Labour, the operatives' executives offered to submit the whole dispute to the arbitration of the Permanent Industrial Court, pledging themselves to abide by the findings of the Court.

This may have been essentially a tactical move designed to place the employers in the wrong, since it was well known that the latter were determined to refuse arbitration. But it was none the less an indication that the mood of the operatives was far from intransigent, and evidence of a conclusive character soon followed. It emerged that the operatives' leaders on the spinning side of the trade were ready after all to accept the principle of a reduction of wages and to negotiate with the employers as to the extent of the reduction, that indeed they really preferred that course to the arbitration which they had formally offered. It appears, indeed, to have been their intention to negotiate an agreement for the spinning industry, immediately on the failure of the joint negotiations, but the Cardroom Executive, seeking confirmation of their proposed action from a delegate meeting which happened to be in session, failed to obtain it, and the Operative Spinners' Executive deemed it inadvisable to proceed alone. The unions on the manufacturing side have declared that the terms of their ballot leave them no authority to negotiate for a wage reduction; but behind this formal difficulty, it is fairly clear that the temper among the weavers is decidedly stiffer than that on the spinning side.

None the less, these developments make it inevitable that reductions of wages should ultimately be agreed to; and it may be hoped that it will not be long before negotiations are commenced and bargains are struck. The spinning operatives are wise, we think, in wishing to come quickly to terms; for the strategical advantage in the dispute is undoubtedly with the employers. Still there is something almost puzzling in this reasonableness. It is not, one feels, wholly to be explained by calculations of prudence. There remains, one feels, more of the old fundamental agreement between the two sides than appears on the surface. When all is said and done, the spinners prefer to deal direct with their employers than to invoke the intervention of outsiders. "Further, the Operative Spinners' Executive Council," declared the statement issued last Saturday, "prefer to conduct their own arbitration, believing that they know as much about the particular circumstances of the trade as any outside body. . . ." There speaks the authentic voice of Lancashire.

LABOUR'S FOREIGN POLICY

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD indicated towards the end of the Parliamentary session that as soon as he was freed from the day-to-day demands of Westminster he would devote himself before everything else to the naval negotiations with the United States. Mr. Henderson's liberty from Parliamentary tasks will release his energies for activity in other directions, particularly in those of Egypt and of Russia, though even tasks so immediate and important as these will have somehow to be combined with an August spent on Reparations at the Hague and a September devoted to the League Assembly at Geneva.

The arrangement by which the Prime Minister keeps the American negotiations in his own hands is sound, for a naval agreement obviously concerns the Admiralty even more than the Foreign Office, and, unless the Sea Lords have changed their spots and their stripes more miraculously than any leopard or zebra ever did, it will need all the authority the head of the Government can command to bring their ideas of naval requirements into line with the Cabinet's ideas of national policy. Mr. MacDonald has begun well by laying it down categorically that the provision made by diplomatic agreements for the avoidance

of war must have some bearing—precisely what bearing may be a matter of discussion—on the provision to be made by the fighting services for national defence in war. That, it may be observed, is a proposition already enunciated by Mr. MacDonald's predecessor, in the speech he made as Prime Minister at the Guildhall Banquet last November, but the slight reductions introduced into this year's service estimates by the late Government translate the principle into action a good deal less effectively than the Labour Cabinet's decision to hold up a large part of the naval building programme till the results of the conversations with America are disclosed. Mr. Hoover's similar and simultaneous action has at once given that decision whatever justification it needed.

It is to be hoped that Mr. MacDonald will keep constantly in mind the importance of carrying the other naval Powers with him. The Anglo-French naval compromise offers an example to be steadfastly avoided. The French are quite as sensitive as the Americans, and the virtual conclusion of an Anglo-American agreement, to be broadened out subsequently by extension to Japan, France, and Italy, may very well give offence in more quarters than one. Mr. Lloyd George did well to draw attention to that danger, and it is satisfactory to know that the Prime Minister is alive to it. The right course would seem to be the transference of the discussions to the Preparatory Commission at Geneva as soon as the understanding between Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Hoover has been sufficiently developed. Washington has shown clearly enough that it regards the present conversations as part and parcel of the League's disarmament negotiations, and, in handing over the details of discussion to Lord Cecil, the Prime Minister will know that he is putting them into as safe and capable hands as can be found in this field. Important as naval reduction is, disarmament must be treated as a whole, and the readiness of the chief naval Powers to do their part is a card that can be judiciously played when the question of military establishments is on the agenda.

Mr. Henderson has Egypt and Russia on his hands, to say nothing of the Reparations Conference, where however the chief rôle is, no doubt, reserved for Mr. Snowden. How far the elimination of M. Poincaré will affect the situation is doubtful, for every Frenchman is a Poincaré where money is at stake; but it can hardly fail to be an advantage to all concerned for M. Briand, who habitually goes into negotiations with the intention of reaching a settlement, to be free of the shackles the late President of the Council's rigidity would have imposed.

The fact that the French have declined to come to London for the conference will make it difficult for Mr. Henderson to attend to other matters. Fortunately there is nothing immediately urgent about either of the principal questions in hand. Whatever crisis Lord Lloyd's enforced, or encouraged, resignation might have provoked, vanished before it grew to visible magnitude. Last week's debate in the House revealed Mr. Churchill as at once singularly mischievous and singularly ineffective in Opposition, Mr. Henderson as a capable exponent of a thoroughly sound case, and Sir Austen Chamberlain (absent from the House because absent from England) as distinctly more liberal in this, as in some other matters, than was commonly realized.

In any case Lord Lloyd's retirement from the scene is only an episode. The Government's future Egyptian policy is a much more serious matter. To speak of a definite policy is perhaps premature, for a Cabinet committee on the question has only just been appointed, but some at least of the rumours that have found their way into the Press of London and Cairo would appear to be well founded. If, as Lord Parmoor stated in the House of Lords, all interference with Egypt's internal affairs is to end, the transfer of

British troops from the interior of the country to the Canal zone must necessarily follow. That is perfectly consistent with the 1922 declaration, though if a strictly military defence of the Canal by British troops (as opposed to the more effective defence that might be secured by associating the League of Nations with the guardianship) is to be insisted on, some agreement may have to be reached about the fresh water canal. On this and other greater matters the important point is who approves the agreement on the Egyptian side. When all is said that might be said for the expedient of negotiating a settlement intrinsically satisfactory to all Egyptians with the present unrepresentative Cabinet and relying on the *fait accompli* to secure its acceptance, that is a method which no Labour Government ought to, and no Liberal Government could, approve. The coming treaty, if there is to be a coming treaty, must be accepted on the Egyptian side by a Parliament or a Constituent Assembly genuinely representative of the Egyptian people. However estimable the present Prime Minister may be personally, he is in no position, while the constitution remains suspended, to commit his countrymen to the acceptance of an agreement which only their free approval can make durable and effective. From its own point of view Egypt was ill-advised to reject the draft treaty of 1927. It would be much more ill-advised to reject the terms the present Administration appears to be ready to offer, for they go substantially farther in their concessions to Egyptian national feeling than any Egyptian Government has had, or is likely to have, the opportunity of accepting. Given reasonable common sense on the part of the Wafd an agreement is perfectly possible which will remove the existing friction between the two countries and spell no detriment whatever to any legitimate British interest.

Meanwhile the Foreign Secretary has begun his conversations with M. Dovgalevsky, whom the Soviet Government has dispatched as its envoy to London with no very good grace, to discuss the details of that resumption of diplomatic relations which Moscow appears to have thought the Labour Government would put in train with precipitation and enthusiasm the moment it assumed office. Mr. Henderson, on the contrary, is very wisely proceeding with considerable deliberation. He has wasted no time, but there is no reason why the Foreign Office machinery should move faster in relation to Russia than to other States whose habits and practices are more normal. Diplomatic relations with a country whose leading political figures are openly or secretly encouraging subversive propaganda against Great Britain are likely to be just as strained under a Labour Government as under a Conservative, except that Conservatives have a habit of taking these irregularities portentously and fail to realize how completely abortive Moscow's propaganda has been in the long run wherever it has been attempted.

But it is perfectly right for Mr. Henderson to seek a plain answer to the plain question whether Moscow, in entering into a relationship which implies straight dealing, is in fact prepared to deal straightly. As for the debts and compensation controversy, that stands in another category. It is in Russia's interest quite as much as that of her creditors to reach some sort of settlement, but the resumption of diplomatic relations need not, and should not, be made dependent on that. The settlement will be facilitated rather than otherwise by the dispatch of a British Ambassador to Moscow and the appearance of a Russian Ambassador in London, though it would be a mistake to assume that such a step will have immediate or momentous results. But it is a move in the right direction, and it is satisfactory that the Government is making it.

Altogether Labour's foreign policy has in its first phases, at any rate, been well conceived, and the approval

Sir Herbert Samuel gave in the House of Commons to the Government's attitude on Egypt reflects the support Liberals in the country are able to give so far to the Cabinet's handling of foreign affairs generally. The decision to sign the Optional Clause—it may be hoped without reservations—has been taken definitely, and Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Henderson will have the opportunity at Geneva in September of obliterating the reactionary indications—in such matters as cuts in the budget, or the proposed reduction in number of Council meetings—that have too often called the earnestness of this country's support of the League in question in the recent past. If M. Briand's rumoured crusade for a United States of Europe boils down to a new attack on European tariffs, British support may enable some of the deferred harvest of the World Economic Conference to be garnered after all. But disarmament is likely to be the *motif* of this year's Assembly, and with a British delegation in which neither resource nor determination is lacking, the ground should be well prepared for a substantial advance in the gradual substitution of security collectively guaranteed for security individually attempted.

H. WILSON HARRIS.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTES

THE concluding week in Parliament, prior to the recess which all members feel that they have earned, if not by their labours at Westminster, at least by their efforts to arrive there, was not without interest. We began with the third reading of the Housing (Revision of Contributions) Bill, and although, upon reaching that stage, it was obvious that the measure of subsidy proposed by the Government must be granted, one felt that the effect of subsidies for good or for evil had never been properly analyzed until the remarkable speech of Sir J. Tudor Walters. Partly by the prestige of the personal superintendence of the building of twenty thousand houses, partly by a parliamentary manner which informed without lecturing, he obtained not only assent but applause from benches on all sides. It may be a reflection on the Party System that there are few speeches so delivered or so received, but although this was no party contribution Liberals were proud to claim its author as their own.

* * *

On Tuesday the third reading of the Development (Loan Guarantees and Grants) Bill produced nothing new, and interest centred mainly upon "Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Prayer," a pathetic title, and on the whole a pathetic performance. He was praying, of course, with a paternal interest, for his specially appointed Guardians, but as under his own legislation their life could not in any event have been a long one, the question of a reprieve was not really a major issue. It was in fact a very bad wicket for the Official Opposition to bat upon, and Miss Susan Lawrence, keeping an excellent length and spinning the ball nicely, had them all in difficulties and dismissed them for a negligible score. Mr. Jack Jones has been heard to observe that, given certain conditions, he is a better man than Lady Astor. It may be said with equal force that Susan is the best man on his side.

* * *

Mr. Norman Birkett, upon the adjournment, called attention to a reported case of brutal assault upon a boy of thirteen at Barnsley who had ventured during the election to wear political colours distasteful to his assailants. The case was presented with studied moderation by the

Liberal K.C., and Mr. Short's reply was everything that could be desired, but certain back-benchers on the Government side displayed a restlessness which was entirely unprovoked and somewhat mysterious. The interest of all parties should be the same in preventing such outrages, and it is open to all alike, as Mr. Lloyd George pointed out, to demand an inquiry into any case that may have come to their notice.

* * *

Mr. Fenner Brockway is to be congratulated for his courage in tackling the Home Secretary on his refusal to give asylum to Mr. Trotsky. There is nothing in the career of that enigmatic personality to make him a sympathetic subject for knights errant in search for a distressed maiden, but that only makes the point of principle more clear. Mr. Clynes's defence of his refusal was feeble in the extreme. He explained to the House laboriously and quite unnecessarily that in international law the Right of Asylum is the right of the nation and not of the individual. But it is not that right (obviously the common possession of every sovereign State from China to Peru) but the tradition of its exercise without reference to objection from abroad or inconvenience at home that has been claimed as the peculiar pride of this nation. All this was clearly pointed out by the three Liberals who supported Mr. Brockway, among whom one was particularly glad to hear Mr. Percy Harris, moved and moving by his honest indignation.

* * *

One does not like to suggest that the action of the Home Secretary has been dictated by fear of another Red Letter stampede. What then? Is it anticipated that Mr. Trotsky might be assassinated, or that his presence would cause trouble with the Soviet authorities? But either of these objections would have applied with equal force to many of the exiles, illustrious or notorious, to whom we have from time to time given shelter.

* * *

Friday, the concluding day, was mainly occupied in a strenuous battle over the resignation of Lord Lloyd. This had been anticipated the day before in Another Place by a Baronial Doubles event in which the driving and smashing of the Birkenhead-Brentford pair had been altogether too much for the tentative lobbing of the Parmoor-Passfield combination.

* * *

But it would seem, if I may change the simile, as though the tactics of the Prime Minister were based upon the example of the Norman William at Hastings. He had only retreated in the early stages of the fight so as to draw his enemy from their position and then return upon them with crushing force. Certainly in the second phase of the battle "Uncle" Arthur Henderson wielded a surprisingly effective mace in the best style of Odo of Bayeux, and, when Winston tried to fight back, he only gave an opportunity to the Prime Minister to show that he, too, can splinter a good lance when he cares to ride a straight course.

* * *

What do the Tories think that they have gained by this debate, for Lord Lloyd, for themselves, or for the nation? They have fought a battle over the body of a distinguished public servant, and it is to be hoped that he is grateful for their good intentions. They have dragged to light all their Cabinet disagreements with Lord Lloyd and with one another over Egyptian policy, and thereby given a handle to the very forces which they most desire to discourage. Through Mr. Churchill they have delivered an attack upon the Permanent Officials of the Foreign Office, one of the few departments over which Providence has

never permitted their spokesman to preside. And, lastly, they have allowed the Government to ride home in a blaze of gratuitous glory. A day's work for which Mr. Belloc has supplied the only fitting moral:—

"Decisive action in the hour of need
Denotes the hero—but does not succeed."

Or, if a sub-title is desired:—

"Don't start a rough-house when the other guys
have all the guns."

* * *

Sir Herbert Samuel gave perfect expression to the views of the Liberal Party, and probably of the nation. We all regret the debate and the occasion for it, but the responsibility must rest with those who stirred up the mud. And, though the future progress of Egyptian affairs will be watched with natural anxiety, nothing has so far transpired which should shake confidence in the attitude of the Government in that regard.

* * *

An incidental evil of this more than futile foray was that it distracted attention from the important ensuing discussion upon the Young Report. Mr. Lloyd George was in his best form, and obviously earned the gratitude of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by expressing the latter's own views with more vigour and directness than was possible for any Government spokesman. Mr. Snowden succeeded, however, in putting the essence of the matter in a felicitous phrase: "Our share of the annuity may be compared to the ordinary shares in a perhaps not very sound concern, whereas the unconditional payments may be regarded as first-class debentures." Dr. Leslie Burgin wound up the debate in a speech which no one could have believed to be a maiden effort, and which showed once again how well the party is equipped at all points.

* * *

A curious feature of the debate on so important a subject was the silence and, one might almost say, the absence of the Conservative Opposition. True, Mr. Churchill had disqualified himself for treading here like an angel by stepping in earlier in another capacity. But was not this an opportunity for Arthur Michael Samuel to kindle a livelier spark than mechanical lighters ever yielded him? And surely it was worth while for the party which claims to represent the largest number of voters to declare, even in a sentence, that they would support the Government in defence of our national interests.

ERIMUS.

THE CARE OF INLAND WATERS

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

TO not a few of us the end of the great drought brings disappointment, not because we had set our hearts on picnics or sunbaths, but because we hoped that the drought might bring salvation to our rivers. This may seem to be a paradox, but looked at in the right way it is not. We thought we saw signs that the British Public, serenely indifferent, as ever, to the warnings and suggestions of Royal Commissions, Select Committees, and the like—because it does not read them—was beginning to sit up and take notice. In London it was not allowed to waste water, and in many parts of the country it could not get water to waste. It was beginning to be peevish, and we had begun to hope that, at long last, the Government might be stung or kicked or otherwise impelled to do something—and that conceivably it might do the right thing. With the end of the drought our hopes have fallen.

"In multitude of counsellors there is safety," said King Solomon; and, so far as our inland waters are concerned, successive British Governments seem to have thought that that was the end of the matter. If King Solomon had been addressing a British Government, he would probably have added—certainly, if he was as wise as repute made him—that the counsel of the counsellors must be applied in practice, not merely put into print. For wise counsel is like a finely tempered sword, which, without a hand to grasp it and wield it with courage, is a very pretty weapon, but of mighty little use.

And so it has been with the reports of a number of Commissions and Committees which, during the past fifty years or so, have reported on our inland waters regarded from various points of view. There have been about a dozen of them: they have all reported, many of them several times: but there has been no visible result. This is all the more remarkable because the reports, while they deal with different aspects of the use of water supplies, reveal a measure of agreement amounting to what might be called qualified unanimity on the subject of administration. On one point there is an extraordinary consensus of opinion, namely, that the unit of local administration must be a watershed, a catchment area, a basin, or whatever other term may be used to indicate a complete river system, above ground and under ground, from the source to the sea. Every Commission or Committee of importance, whether its reference concerned pollution—these are by far the most numerous—or fisheries, or drainage, or water power, emphatically insisted upon the natural geographical area of a river as the unit of administration, so that each river might be treated as a whole. But beyond a provision in the Local Government Act, 1888, enabling joint committees of County Councils to be set up, on the application of County Councils, to enforce the rather feeble provisions of the Rivers Pollution Prevention Acts, and a recent appeal from the Joint Advisory Committee on River Pollution to County Councils to take advantage of this provision—an appeal which seems to have fallen on deaf ears—no attempt has been made to give effect to the suggestion. No Government has had the courage to stand or fall by legislation requiring the establishment of watershed or river boards.

Probably no Government has really grasped all the complexities of the water question. When you have one department concerned with domestic water supplies and sewage disposal, another with drainage and fisheries, a third with water power and navigation, and a fourth with foreshore, the conditions are unfavourable to a broad view of water administration. Nevertheless, there are two reports which reveal a grasp of the essential fact, that not only must a river basin be treated as a whole, but the protection and allocation of water within the basin for all purposes must be under one control. "There is no question," said the Water Power Resources Committee, "that a river system and its drainage area must be taken as a unit and dealt with as a whole in regard to all the water problems incidental thereto. In this connection the Committee desires to draw attention to the recommendations of Lord Elgin's Commission on Salmon Fisheries, 1902." Twenty-seven years ago, as now, the most enlightened view on the subject of the conservation of our rivers was voiced by persons interested in fisheries. This is no matter for surprise. Fishermen—anglers, perhaps, more especially—are usually persons of observation and reflection, and experience proves that though there may be intelligent persons who are not fishermen, there are very few fishermen who are not intelligent persons.

One learns, therefore, without surprise that the Royal Commission on Salmon Fisheries recognized that water dis-

posal must be treated as a whole. "In England and Wales," said the Commission, "we should prefer to see the administration in the hands of a powerful Watershed Board appointed to deal, not only with salmon and fresh-water fisheries, but with all questions of abstraction and pollution of water." Those who voice the case of the fisheries to-day are again urging the establishment of river or watershed boards to take charge of the river systems from source to mouth. They recognize clearly that the great and growing complexity of the demands upon our waters is such as to call for the oversight and control of impartial bodies equipped with the best technical advice. It is apparent to them, on the one hand, that other interests than those they represent have a claim to a fair share of the benefits of our abundant water supplies, and, on the other, that fisheries stand to gain by intelligent water conservation. If they do not go so far as the Royal Commission of 1902 in readiness to place the conservation of fisheries and the conservation of waters in the same hands, they realize that what is good for the community is, in the long run, good for the fisheries, and that, for all purposes, the first necessity is clean rivers with an adequate flow from source to mouth. "Give us this," they say, in effect, "and we will look after the fish."

On another aspect of the administration of rivers and inland waters the Commissions and Committees speak with more reserve, though their true convictions are barely concealed. They are all convinced of the necessity of some controlling body at headquarters, but their conclusions are marked by unwillingness to tread upon departmental corns. Nearly all their reports bear traces of anxiety to reconcile conflicting views, which is particularly marked in the report of the Water Power Resources Committee. It is apparent from beginning to end of the report that the Committee wishes to recommend a Central Water Department. Instead it recommends the most complicated machinery conceivable. There is to be a Water Commission "having jurisdiction over England and Wales and responsible directly to the Minister of Health." This Commission, so far as can be understood, while "directly responsible to the Minister of Health," is to have controlling powers overlapping those of the Minister of Health and of the Board of Trade, both of which are to be enlarged. The machinery is further to be complicated by the establishment of a statutory Interdepartmental Committee with which the Water Commission is to confer.

There is so much that is excellent in the report of the Water Power Resources Committee that the conclusion is grievously disappointing. What is needed in the administration of water supplies is simplification, not complication. In this respect the report of the Royal Commission on Land Drainage is most refreshing. They know what they want: "That a Central Land Drainage Authority be set up for each catchment area, where necessary." "That the County Councils and County Borough Councils within a catchment area should be required to prepare a scheme for the constitution of the Catchment Area Authority and to obtain the approval of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries thereto. In default the Minister should himself constitute the Authority." "That, if a Catchment Area Authority defaults, its powers should be exercised by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries." There is no "damned nonsense" about these recommendations. An area blessed with a river is to be compelled to look after its river or have it looked after by the Central Authority, presumably at the expense of the locality. But, whatever the Royal Commission may have thought, it did not suggest that the Catchment Area Authority should have other duties than drainage. And yet drainage is very intimately connected

with all the other problems of a river basin. Perhaps the Commission were more enlightened than their report suggested, and trusted that the rest would follow. They had, at any rate, no doubt about the Central Authority. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries was, and was to remain, the Central Authority for Land Drainage.

Nobody wishes to encourage the creation of new departments. It is right, therefore, that we should consider whether any of the existing departments could properly be entrusted with the responsibilities of a Supreme Water Authority for all purposes. Was the Royal Commission on Land Drainage deliberately dropping a hint? The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, already responsible for drainage and fisheries, not to mention agriculture, which, though many forget it, has an interest in clean and abundant water supplies, has shown an intelligent appreciation of the needs of the country in this respect, and has made a determined effort, though lacking regulative powers, to protect the rivers against further pollution. There is reason to think that, given the powers, this department would attack the water problem with vigour. Of the existing departments it is probably the one best qualified by its general outlook to be entrusted with the functions of a Central Water Authority.

If, however, we face the facts fairly and squarely, we are forced to the conclusion that the Central Water Department must be independent of all others. The importance of our water supplies under and above ground is such that it demands the attention of a department free from all other preoccupations and uninfluenced by any departmental bias or allegiance—a department which would exercise in respect of water supplies the functions exercised by the Treasury in matters of finance. Surely the analogy holds good? And herein lies the answer to one of the principal objections urged against the creation of a new department—that it would cut across the activities of the existing ones. That is just what it should do. The existing departments could lay their views before the Water Department, generally through an inter-departmental committee such as is suggested by the Water Power Resources Committee, particularly by direct approach in individual cases. The Water Department would be a Water Treasury. But its powers must go beyond mere allocation and control; it must have statutory powers of administration, including the power to require the establishment of Watershed Boards, or, in the alternative, itself to exercise in any watershed the functions of such a Board. From it the Water Boards would derive full power to act for the conservation of the supplies within their areas, subject to appeal to the Central Water Department. Only thus can we hope to arrest the effects of the devastating onset of what we call civilization.

It is not generally recognized that the water resources of the country are limited; that you cannot take underground supplies without reducing the ultimate flow of some stream, or the depth of water in some well; that the effects of the impounding of head waters or the diversion, by piping, of other over-ground supplies will be felt throughout the course of the stream; that there is an intimate connection between land drainage and irrigation; that the present-day necessity for taking thousands of acres of land out of cultivation for the purpose of making impervious roads is gravely affecting both the quantity and the quality of our water supplies; that our underground supplies are being exhausted—often wastefully—and our over-ground supplies rendered unavailable through unchecked pollution; and, in short, that the whole question of water supplies, whether for power, for domestic use, or for fisheries, is one which needs to be considered as a whole with concentration and with reason.

The recent drought has brought the question of water supplies again into prominence, but what is the first suggestion offered for meeting the present crisis? It is that those sufferers from various water schemes who have—often at the expense of costly Parliamentary proceedings—secured compensation water, should be deprived of it. In other words, Peter is to be robbed to pay Paul's gambling debts. In the circumstances of the time this may be regarded as a necessary palliative, but it is not a remedy. The best administration cannot, of course, prevent a drought; but a rational system of water conservation directed to the protection of our inland waters, above and below ground, against waste and contamination, may go far to forestall its effects and to secure that, in all conditions, every member of the community shall have his fair share of their use and enjoyment. There is no need for further inquiry; every aspect of the question has been fully explored; it is time to follow the counsel of the multitude of counsellors, wherein lies safety.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTINUITY

WHEN I muse on electoral gambles, I grieve in my inmost soul
To think of the national interests that turn on the chance
of the poll;
And chief of those national interests (or so it appears to me)
Is Jowitt—Sir William Jowitt—Sir William Jowitt, K.C.

Suppose (there's no harm in supposing) the next election
played pranks,
And put the Liberals in office, and shattered the Labour
ranks;
'Twould be jam for Sir Herbert Samuel; 'twould be jam
for myself and L. G.—
But what would become of Jowitt, Sir William Jowitt,
K.C.?

Could he find a home for his spirit, and solace, and health
of soul,
'With a party in opposition; its leaders thrown on the dole?
Would his heart not bleed for his Country, to think what
her loss would be
If she could not call to her councils Sir William Jowitt,
K.C.?

Or would he recall, as aforetime, that he couldn't distin-
guish in aught
The party that he had been fighting from the party for
which he had fought?
So the great, soft heart of the public should throb with
pleasure to see,
In the list of the new appointments, Sir William Jowitt,
K.C.

But the wheel might complete the circle, and bring us
Baldwin once more,
Complete with pipe and with pledges, and "Safety First"
as before.
He'd safeguard our woollens and laces, and the drinking of
Empire tea—
But how could he safeguard Jowitt, Sir William Jowitt,
K.C.?

Let's hope that he'd find some solace for a soul aflame and
athirst:
Let us hope that Sir William Jowitt would still put his
Country first:
For what does a party matter, if only the world may see
The path made clear to the Woolsack for Sir William
Jowitt, K.C.?

MACFLECKNOE.

LIFE AND POLITICS

THE Government has now obtained the freedom from Parliament for which Mr. MacDonald has been long-ing. It will be interesting to see what they do with it. The strain of exercising incessant caution, involved in the conditions of their existence, must have been very great these last weeks, and no one grudges Ministers a little administrative breathing time. Their troubles will return soon enough in the winter, when the accumulated I.O.U.s are due for payment. Looking back on the past weeks one must acknowledge that the Cabinet has developed a Blondin-like balance in toeing the narrow line of safety. Labour's chief claim on our gratitude so far is simply that they have rid us of the Baldwin Government. In so doing they started with a fund of goodwill in hand, though it is open to question whether they might not have made bolder use of it. They have been painfully aware of their minority position, and a certain timidity has marked them even in sorting out the muddled accounts left by their unlamented predecessors. By common consent they have done well in international affairs. Mr. MacDonald has put us right with America—the essential thing—and will succeed, as we all hope, in saving us from senseless and suicidal naval competition. In home affairs the Government have repeatedly failed to see that there is often more safety in courage than in compromise. They had to be pushed into raising the school-leaving age. Inevitably they will be judged by the effect of their measures upon the unemployment figures. No one is anxious to hustle Mr. Thomas, whose task is extraordinarily difficult. He is a courageous man, saddled with a timid policy, and the omens for his success are not particularly bright. Still, no one who knows him doubts that he will produce, if not the goods, at least some handsome-looking goods trains.

Mr. Henderson extricated himself with great address from the Egyptian trouble. Lord Lloyd's resignation was, in the circumstances, a godsend to the Government. The Tories, or at least an indiscreet minority of Tories, presented Mr. Henderson with a splendid opportunity. Mr. Churchill, led astray by excessive zeal for his friend, made an unholy mess of it. If rumour is correct, it was only due to the advocacy of Mr. Churchill and Lord Birkenhead in the last Cabinet that Lord Lloyd was maintained in his position in Egypt at times when his policy of "thorough" was too much even for Sir Austen. Mr. Churchill's reckless speech in the House of Commons deprived his protégé of any sympathy that may have lingered in uninstructed minds. Lord Lloyd is an able and disinterested man, but it was well understood that so long as he was in control in Egypt there was no real prospect of the success of a conciliatory policy. It was he, as everyone now knows, who made the continuance of the dictatorship possible. Mr. Churchill blundered into making a present to his opponents of the admission that the refusal of the Labour Government to work with Lord Lloyd meant "sloppy surrender and defeat"—or, in sober language, that liberal interpretation of the Declaration of 1922, to which Mr. Churchill's own colleagues were pledged as much as the Government now in office. In his effort to rouse sympathy for his friend, Mr. Churchill did not scruple to raise doubts concerning the impartiality of the Foreign Office officials—a passage that must have made Mr. Baldwin squirm in his seat. Once more Mr. Churchill has demonstrated that fatal instability of judgment that largely cancels out his brilliant gifts.

Lord Lloyd has been very properly got rid of, because his policy in Egypt is hopelessly out of date. He sincerely believes that it is still possible to govern Egypt as a Pro-

consul governs a conquered province. Consequently the attempt to use his case as a stick to beat the Government with was a failure. But this is not the whole of the story. It has not escaped notice that Mr. Henderson, in successfully repelling a rather unscrupulous attack, has managed to get away without giving Parliament and the public information to which they are entitled, if there is any meaning in the Labour professions of open diplomacy. What exactly is happening with regard to Egypt? Is it, or is it not, a fact that Mr. Henderson has been conferring with Mahmoud Pasha over a draft Treaty? Parliament has dispersed without obtaining a glimmer of light on these essential points. There are many indications that a Treaty has been talked about. We look to the Labour Government precisely for a "change of policy" in the sense that they shall carry out the settled policy—disturbed by the Lloyd regime and the dictatorship—of arranging the affairs of Egypt, through unfettered negotiations between the democratic Parliaments of the two countries. Mr. Henderson has given no indication that this is his intention. On the contrary, he has given reason for the fear that he may come to an understanding with a Prime Minister who has ruthlessly suppressed democratic institutions. Such a treaty, if we can conceive it possible, would be worthless. It would be destroyed the moment it was attempted to call into existence an Egyptian Parliament to ratify it. A word from Mr. Henderson might remove these fears, but he has not spoken it.

Those who are nervous about treating with the wicked Russians and see the Bolshevik bogey everywhere are, of course, worried by the visit of Mr. Dovgalevsky. There is really no need. "Uncle Arthur" is safe, and he is also slow. His conversations with the Russian envoy this week are not even preliminary. They are pre-preliminary. He has merely discussed with him the manner in which future discussions may be approached. There is plenty of time for reflection before anything so terrible happens as actual negotiations leading to the resumption of diplomatic relations. Mr. Henderson will be away from England until the end of September. When he returns he may or he may not come to grips with the Russian situation. According to report, he will begin by raising the question of propaganda. No doubt a face-saving formula will be found, but everyone knows that it is about as useful to ask the Soviets to refrain from propaganda as it would be to ask the Salvation Army to refrain from preaching Salvation. Propaganda is the one Bolshevik weapon against a world of enemies. So far am I from sharing the *MORNING POST*'s terrors in this matter, that I think it would pay our Government to establish compulsory classes in Marxian economics among the workers. That would smother any lingering communism in boredom and rage.

I hope Mr. Lansbury will fall in with the request made to him this week that he should provide a shelter on the Serpentine where children may enjoy sun-bathing. London is badly behind many foreign cities in this respect. At Lausanne, for instance, you may see excellent provision at the lake side for children to soak in sunshine. The benefit to health, in the prevention of such diseases as tuberculosis and rickets, has been proved conclusively by statistics. The common attitude to sun-bathing in this country is more the result of prudery than stupidity. Not long ago a man who ventured to sun himself in a park, clad only in shorts, was haled before a magistrate. Small boys attempting to bathe in unauthorized London waters are harried by the police. One hot summer, I remember, the basins of Trafalgar Square fountains were for some days full of happy, splashing children. Then some busybody, horrified

by the spectacle of nakedness, complained, and the police restored the respectability of London. The Germans are a sensible people, and they do not allow Mrs. Grundy to prevent their getting full enjoyment and benefit from air and light upon the body. In this country even mixed bathing was only allowed in public places after a long fight with noxious Puritans. The medical and health experts who try to drill a little sense into our authorities, Governmental and municipal, have an uphill fight of it. They are lucky if they escape with being labelled "cranks." Yet things do move. Towards the end of the great heat wave quite respectable persons were seen in the Strand in open-necked shirts, and I rejoiced to come across tram conductors (a severe class of men) so attired. Mr. Lansbury has probably made more touching speeches about the sufferings of the children of the poor than any politician. Here is a chance for him.

* * *

Mr. Epstein, like Socrates, goes about outraging the orthodox in the great cause of making them think. This is a healthy but painful process, as may be judged from the furious letters one reads and the still more furious and unprintable conversations one hears. Only Mr. Epstein has this peculiar effect upon the British public, and one feels grateful to him. I have no right to join in the æsthetic free fight that is raging round the statues, except as one of those described by the sculptor as "the fools in the street." After all, he has submitted his work to us. My own simple "reaction" to these groups is as follows. First and most important, I derive from them an impression of overwhelming power. They seem to me tremendously expressive; in the "Night," expressive of the heavy brooding weight of sleep; in the "Day" of the alertness of strength rejoicing in the light. These vast lumps of stone are somehow alive. But as I go on gazing I have other, less agreeable impressions. I feel the presence of something sinister, menacing, which I cannot define. This feeling is disturbing to that happy consciousness of quickened awareness to beauty one should derive from great art. The uncouthness and distortions of the figures simply perplex me: I cannot now or at any time understand why Mr. Epstein thinks them necessary. I am willing to stand the derision which is the lot of the "fool in the street" when he utters his folly in the hearing of the elect, but I do wish these things away. They seem obstacles deliberately placed between one's eyes and the astonishing power of the conception. If only Mr. Epstein could get rid of the "Bourgeois complex"! If only he would believe that it is possible to dislike certain gross features in his works, and yet to think as he doubtless does about the Queen Victoria Memorial—or the threatened Haig statue!

* * *

The other day I was examining some fine reproductions of the pictures in the Louterell Psalter, and I was delighted to learn that this famous book has been snatched from the jaws of the expectant American dealers. It has been brought home to everyone of late that not even the most precious national possessions—or what we all thought to be such—is safe from foreign conquest in these days of impoverished families and heavy death duties. Nor is it any safeguard when fine things are lent by their owners to the great collections. The Portland vase had been admired by generations of visitors to the British Museum, and seemed as safe as the Nelson column. The Louterell Psalter had been in the Museum for many years before it appeared at Sotheby's. Innumerable reproductions in history books have made us all familiar with the exquisite vignettes in the Psalter of fourteenth-century life—precious as evidence, quaint and endearing as art. Its loss would have been irreplaceable. It is hopeless to expect the

British Museum to compete from its exiguous resources with the long pockets of the U.S.A., and in these grim days no Chancellor of the Exchequer is likely to be generous to the extent necessary. We are losing many beautiful things, but on the balance we are not doing so badly. The loss of the Foundling Hospital was a disaster, but we have Ken Wood. Shakespeare First Folios are shipped to America—but we have saved the Louterell Psalter. KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COLONEL WEDGWOOD'S "TRAGIC PICTURE"

SIR,—In calling attention to the "tragic picture" drawn by Colonel Wedgwood in an eight-minutes speech you say "he had no remedy to suggest." It was, of course, impossible to do so in a speech limited by circumstances to "about five minutes."

Let it be remembered that of Mr. Thomas's Colonial development proposals the only definite project is one which fills some of us with alarm, namely, the Zambesi Bridge.

The Zambesi Bridge, estimated to cost, first, £1,000,000, then £2,000,000, now nearly £3,000,000, can, I am informed, only be made to pay if enough natives are taken away from the healthy work of growing above surface the coffee and cotton we want, and sent down mines yet to be sunk to get coal we do not want.

I thought (doubtless in my ignorance) there was so much unemployment in the coalfields that it was uneconomic to search the world for more coalfields and thereby create artificially more competition for bunker coal!

But from whence are the native labourers to be obtained for this great new enterprise? Colonel Wedgwood did not tell the whole tragic story of the effects on labour recruitment in Africa. Has civilization yet realized that in some of the territories under European control over 70 per cent. of the people are suffering with V.D., that infantile mortality ranges in certain African territories from 400 to 800 per 1,000 per annum? Surely, too, the British public knows that the Zambesi Bridge and all that it entails means securing more labour from Portuguese territories which can only be "recruited" by well-known methods. The recent Mozambique Convention reducing recruitment for the mines by 20,000 natives a year was only signed because of the alarming consequences attaching to recruitment of native labour in Portuguese East Africa.

The "tragic picture" limned by Colonel Wedgwood only portrayed part of what is going on—the break-up of family and tribal life, the disease-ridden swamps, the joylessness of village life, the heartbreak not of thousands but of millions of Nature's simple children. Is this to be the result of our vaunted *Trusteeship*?

The alternative?

(1) Recognize first that in tropical and sub-tropical regions only the native can work the soil and produce the fibres, oil-seeds, grain, gums, and spices we require. Then, having realized this, leave the native to his land and to his family.

(2) The "job" of the white immigrant unable to use his hands is that of using his brains to organize trading relations for the purpose of exchanging the manufactured articles of civilization with the ever-growing volume of raw material produced by contented tribes.

(3) Finally, what is the place of Government? To keep public order and administer justice, leave commerce to private individuals, provide education, more particularly the higher branches of agricultural instruction.

Within the compass of these three main lines of Colonial administration there is plenty of room for the expenditure of public funds, the investment of which would repay itself tenfold. Wherever these main lines have been observed, contentment, prosperity, and peace have followed; where they have been transgressed, the results have been disastrous.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN H. HARRIS.

Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

July 29th, 1929.

THE COTTON DISPUTE

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to the remarks on the Cotton Industry Dispute which appeared in THE NATION on July 27th. I notice that you do not give your readers the opportunity themselves of judging between the TIMES leader to which you refer and the reply which it evoked from the employers. Might it not be fairer to publish the two statements than merely to give your own conclusions? I ask this of you especially because we can hardly expect an entirely unbiased version from a Journal that sponsored the cartelization experiment and other aspects of rationalization, which, in this instance, were the main points at issue between ourselves, as cotton practitioners, and our outside critics.—Yours, &c.,

F. HOLROYD, President.

The Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' Associations, Limited.

July 30th, 1929.

[We regret that we can hardly spare the space to reproduce the leading article and letter referred to. We deal with the dispute in the cotton industry on another page.—ED., NATION.]

THE TENPENNY SHILLING

SIR,—In your last issue there is an interesting letter from Mr. Chas. Robertson on "sources of revenue," in the course of which he writes:—

"Another source of revenue would be to introduce the tenpenny shilling: it would bring an immense increase to the receipts of the Post Office, and incidentally benefit the railway companies and help them through their difficulties."

May I ask Mr. Robertson to expand this idea? It may be dull of me, but I am unable to attribute any meaning to "the tenpenny shilling" which would help the Post Office and the railways.—Yours, &c.,

TWELVE PENCE.

THE DECLINE OF FICTION

F ICTION—the art of working in imagined material with imaginary characters—is under a cloud. A subtle air of disrespect attends its public appearances. Disrespect is perhaps too definite a word—it is more a faint coldness, the involuntary coldness one assumes towards a person of whom one has heard that he is probably up to no good. Never has the novel reached so high a level of technical perfection, never has it displayed more subtlety and acuteness of perception, more grace of manner, and never has it been so little regarded in the best company—except by novelists and reviewers of novels. Even so solid and imaginative a piece of work as "The Old Wives' Tale" would, if it were offered to-day, be less regarded than a good specimen of that biographical art which probes with ever more and more delicate instruments the intellectual and emotional motives of some man who has actually lived, or a record of actual experience set down with as much honesty and charm as the narrator can command, and invested with the enchanting melancholy of remembered things. It is as if we needed first to be assured that what we are reading was actually felt or thought or lived in action by a real person, the narrator or another, before we can accord it the deepest attention and respect of which our minds are capable. What we care for in a book is no longer that it should be, as our fathers said, *true to life*, but that it should be the truth of life, or of a life.

This compulsion laid on the mind of the reader is laid also on the writer. No conscientious novelist to-day but reflects, a hundred times during the writing of a book into which he is "putting all he knows," that it is after all hardly worth while. A distrust of himself—which is ultimately a distrust of the material in which he is working—comes over him. He feels that what he is making is not even an approximation to truth—that approximation made,

with as much honesty and closeness as he can contrive, by the writer who writes down only what has actually happened to him. He feels an impulse to discard the falsifying medium of fiction, in order to write "directly"—that is, of himself, the only living creature about whom he knows even part of the truth. What restrains him from the attempt is probably not only that apathy which keeps us all doing what we have done before, but a profounder scepticism still, which murmurs that the "truth" of the diarist, the biographer, and the writer of a war book, is itself only an approximation. Scepticism, once let loose, is a dry rot that nothing arrests.

The compulsion to "tell the truth" remains. The more sensitive and, if the phrase be allowed, more truly creative a mind, the more fastidiously it turns from the distorting medium of fiction. It shrinks instinctively from a method that, it is persuaded, will diffuse its energy and blunt its delicacy of apprehension. Two of the finest and most creative of modern minds—Mr. Edmund Blunden and Mr. Siegfried Sassoon—do not write "fiction." They write, with an exquisite delicacy and assurance, of what actually was. "The Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man" is not "fiction": it is an attempt to portray truthfully one aspect of a young man's life, as "Undertones of War" is an attempt to tell the truth of one man's war.

The same compulsion manifests itself in what is properly fiction. "Let us tell the truth" is a battle cry as old, in our memory, as the Naturalists, those austere collectors of human documents. The impulse they gave to the novel has not died away: it continues to produce every year a few raw works, dripping with sweat and mud, that bear every mark of having come from the bottom of the well. In those writers the compulsion has got no further than a determination to show life up. In other—and equally solemn—novelists it takes other forms. Mr. Huxley—of whom it is difficult to avoid the faint suspicion that perhaps he once *knew* a Naturalist—fills his novels with discussions of contemporary speculations in science and philosophy: Mr. D. H. Lawrence, with the aid of psychoanalysis, displays an unnerving familiarity with his own unconscious and by analogy with that of his characters. It is idle but interesting to compare Mr. Lawrence with Proust, in whom the compulsion to tell the whole truth was stronger than in any other of those modern writers who have been faithful (notwithstanding the atmosphere of suspicion in which it moves) to the art of fiction. The one so drawn towards the object, whether the object be a young woman's yellow stockings, a meadow in June, or the phantasies of his own unconscious; the other drawing everything into relation with the subject, with himself, there to be transmuted into as strong and delicate a web of thought and feeling as ever human spider contrived; the one working of necessity in space, the other in time: alike in one thing only—the need, which they share with Mr. Huxley and with novelists of lesser genius, to be "honest," to get at the truth of life, to avoid, so far as they may, the disgrace attaching to what is merely "made-up."

Examples might be multiplied, but none of them, however striking, has the force and validity of that intangible feeling which assures every one of us, at moments or all the time, that the very best work of the best modern novelist is not in so high a class as—say—"Undertones of War." This feeling exists, and is undefeatable by argument. It creates a scepticism regarding "mere" fiction. It exerts a compulsion.

This compulsion shows itself in other ways. As, for example, in the welcome accorded by some acute minds to the conclusions of Professor Pavlov, the Russian physio-

logist. The scientific value of his deductions does not here concern us: what is significant is their effect on the literary mind. The reviewer of the *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT* says of him: "Professor Pavlov is led . . . to express the opinion that however elaborate or complex cerebration may be, it is in essence compounded of successions of conditioned reflexes, that is, of acquired, usually temporary, and certainly modifiable interconnections of one neuron system with another. He can trace in the brain no 'higher function,' no other function than this." This conclusion, which, when I arrived at it myself in Professor Pavlov's book, filled me with horror, fills with admiration a man who is doubtless better equipped than myself to understand the book, and who must therefore be giving an accurate account of it. That it does so is another, and an unpleasant, symptom of the working among us of that hostility to "the imagined thing" which in more sensitive minds keeps a Blunden and a Sassoon tied to the actual.

Why? Why does a theory which reduces the finest products of the creative brain to a "nothing but" arouse excited pleasure in certain minds? Why do we, even when we write it, feel a little ashamed of fiction, as of being in the company of a rather vulgar person whom we do not care to introduce to our friends?

The writer who is dealing with a real experience has a clear advantage over the novelist dealing in pretended experiences, in so far as he is accorded in advance the belief which the other has to evoke. That does not explain why we are now more ready to accord respect and admiration to Mr. Blunden than—say—to Mr. Galsworthy. Nor why we feel that we would rather have written "Undertones of War" than "The Man of Property." An obvious answer is that we are still suffering from the shock of the war. We are like children who have been undeceived about certain legends in which we firmly believed. We cry: "Away with fairy tales, away with semblances. Give us the truth." It is possible. But that can at best be only half the answer. Since it is at least as obvious that we do not now begin to despise, because they are not records of actual experience, "Hamlet" or the "Agamemnon."

If we reject "semblances" and demand reality, we are compelled to remind ourselves of Schiller's defence of it. "The greatest stupidity and the highest understanding have herein a certain affinity with each other, that they both seek the *real* and are both quite insensitive to mere semblance . . . in a word, foolishness cannot soar above reality and intelligence cannot remain below truth." A fair statement of our preference for the "truth of life"? Wait. "Inasmuch, then, as need for reality and devotion to the real are merely products of a human defect, indifference to reality and interest in semblance represent a true progress for humanity and a decisive step towards culture." Now where are you?—unless at the juncture of two "semblances," the one which we are given in modern fiction and of which we now doubt the value and respectability, and another, which we are not being given in it, and which it would be more useful to speak of as *symbol* rather than as *semblance*.

We feel—and with what just passion—that "Undertones of War" is more worth while than any modern novel. But do we feel that it is more worth while than the "Agamemnon"? We prefer actuality to let's-pretend, but can we prefer it to a work in which the characters are symbols of an otherwise ineluctable reality?—images of a reality which cannot get itself expressed in any other form?

It is possible that fiction, the novel as we know it, can never become the vehicle for this higher reality, which sleeps in all our minds and can be evoked for us only in

the form of symbols. It can perhaps concern itself only with being and never with becoming. If this is true, then the modern temper (which fulfils itself more fully and with more assurance in modern physics than in the modern novel) will force us to leave the novel behind. More and more the finest minds will reject fiction, and will write directly of what they have felt and known. Until one of them, by virtue of who knows what talisman, will stumble upon the hidden door and, opening it, let out the future.

STORM JAMESON.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Coliseum.

THOSE who would see the English music-hall in its most decorous and even devout mood, should go to the Coliseum while the programme stands as it does. When affairs reach their summit, the curtain goes up on a stage empty of all things save a sleek grand piano. And then Miss Winnie Melville and Mr. Derek Oldham come on and sing. They make no concession whatever to the music-hall spirit. The audience had just been occupied not unenjoyably with two comedians who wished to go to the top of a building on a ladder which was not quite high enough. Miss Melville and Mr. Oldham call on the audience to come up higher, and the audience obeys. The two of them sing together in duets, and, when one of them sings a song, the other retires to a settee and listens reverently. If there is any mannerism at all in their performance, it is that of Mr. Oldham, who carries himself like a public school boy, endowed rather to his own embarrassment with a very beautiful voice. Miss Melville seems to find great pleasure, as well as to give it, in pouring her voice richly into the vast auditorium. Music is not always treated so seriously in the music-hall even by the musical. There is, for example, in this same programme, Miss Gwen Farrar. Miss Farrar can play the violoncello. She and her partner, Mr. Mayerl, gave us a little thing for the piano and violoncello which was quite ravishing to listen to. But before we could have this, and after we had had it, they made us take some of those ultra-smart American talking songs of which we feel ourselves to have had by now enough. We have heard of the pill inside the sugar, but this was the sugar inside the pill.

"Tess of the D'Urbervilles," Duke of York's Theatre.

It was not for such a very minor product of his genius as this stage version of his famous novel that Thomas Hardy received his rare distinction; and for this reason the affix of the Order of Merit after his name on the bills of the present revival seems strangely gratuitous. Merit, indeed, is a quality in the novel which has scarcely survived the process of adaptation. Attention is inevitably concentrated on the plot, and it can hardly be denied that the plot is the least of the novel's excellences. On the stage it becomes mere melodrama, comparable with such plays as "Should a Woman Tell?"—a work, incidentally, whose very title is not inappropriate to this tuppence-coloured "Tess." Even the dignified simplicity of the language is out of place on the stage—at any rate in this play—and the adaptation *per se* is distressingly amateurish and pedestrian, consisting as it does of a mere telescoping and translocation of incidents. Virtually all that remains of the novel's greatness is a certain grandeur and nobility of feeling which shines through the inadequacy of the attempts of a master of literature to write in an unmastered medium. If only Hardy had written the play without any thought of what he imagined to be the requirements of the stage, then he might have given to the stage "Tess" something of the quality of "The Dynasts," though the result would have presented the producer with a pretty problem. Mr. Filmer's production is identical with his original production of four years ago; which is, if one overlooks such occasional blemishes as Tess's shoulder-straps in the fourth act, high praise. But the acting compares unfavourably with that of the former

cast. Mrs. Kate Bugler's Tess was probably very effective in its amateur environment at Dorchester, but in juxtaposition to the mature technique of the rest of the company it is out of tune, and altogether lacking in light and shade. Mrs. Bugler's sincerity carries her through, and was, no doubt, responsible for her enthusiastic reception on the first night; but sincerity is not enough. Mr. Martin Lewis tackles Alec D'Urberville too intelligently and too unconventionally. Alec is, after all, nothing more nor less than a villain of melodrama, and can only be played as such. Mr. Lawrence Anderson has an impossible task as Angel Clare, but he puts up a very good bluff, though becoming at times a little namby-pamby.

"The Mystic Mirror," Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion.

The story of "The Mystic Mirror," written by Robert Reinert, is of the fantastic-melodramatic type which provides excellent material for the films. It concerns a highly romantic old castle, in a tower of which is a mirror which has the mysterious quality of being able to foretell the future. This castle and all its contents have just been bought by a rich young man named Berthold, who arrives with his mistress and a large party of gay friends in several motor-cars. Inevitably attracted by the mirror, he sees in it a representation of himself being strangled by a pair of unknown hands. The shock and terror of the sight change his life: suspicious of everybody, he becomes a nervous wreck, dismisses his mistress and his friends, and wishes to marry the lodge-keeper's daughter, but as he is on the point of doing so his predicted fate overtakes him. Fitz Rasp gives a remarkable performance as Berthold, a cruel, unpleasant, sinister-looking bully, ruthless in the pursuit of his own whims. Rina di Liguoro is effective as the mistress, and Felicitas Malten provides a good contrast as the young and innocent peasant girl. The film is both photographed and directed by Carl Hoffmann, the photographer of "Dr. Mabuse," "The Nibelungs," "Hungarian Rhapsody," and "The Wonderful Lie." His work in this, as in his other films, is original and full of ideas and imagination.

Exhibition of Quilted Work, Londonderry House.

The only good effect of the severe distress in the mining villages of Durham and South Wales has been that it has caused a revival of the quilting industry traditional among the women of those districts. This is one of the most ancient of rural industries in this country: many of the beautiful designs still used by the workers, and handed down from generation to generation of mothers and daughters, date from the Tudor period, and some of them can be traced to origins yet more remote. These designs are quite distinct and characteristic in the different districts, the feather, chain, shell, and fan patterns being typical of the Durham work, whereas the Welsh designs are generally of a geometrical type, sometimes curiously oriental in feeling. The encouragement of this admirable industry, which bears none of the marks of "peasant artiness" or self-conscious rusticity which are so often associated with such things, is largely due to the efforts of Country Industries, Ltd., who have advanced money to the workers for the buying of materials, &c., and have paid them for their work. An exhibition of quilts, dressing-gowns, cushions, and other articles was held on Thursday of last week at Londonderry House, Park Lane, which was kindly lent for the occasion, but examples of the work (which can be carried out in any material chosen) can always be seen, and orders taken, at Country Industries, Ltd., 26, Eccleston Street, S.W.1.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, August 3rd.—

Dr. E. L. Burgin, on "Problem of Security," and Mr. G. Le M. Mander, on "Military Disarmament," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge.

Sunday, August 4th.—

Dr. T. R. Glover, on "Christ and Democracy," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge, 5.30.
League of Nations Geneva Institute of International Relations (August 4th-9th).

Monday, August 5th.—

Professor Ernest Barker, on "The Future of Representative Government," and Mr. Elliott Dodds, on "The Three-Party System," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge.

Tuesday, August 6th.—

Dr. A. McNair, on "The Problem of the Coal Mines"; Mr. H. D. Henderson, on "The Regulation of Industry," and Mr. Hubert Phillips, on "The Outlook for Democracy," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge.
Miss Gertrude Jennings's Comedy, "These Pretty Things," at the Garrick.

Wednesday, August 7th.—

Mr. J. H. Humphreys, on "Electoral Reform," and Dr. Klausner, on "Electoral Reform: Some Constitutional Experiments," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge.

Lord Lugard, on "Past and Present in Africa," the Wireless, 7.25.

Thursday, August 8th.—

Mr. J. H. Simpson, on "An Experiment in Equality of Opportunity," and Mr. Ramsay Muir, on "Liberalism and Labour—The Future of Parliamentary Relations," Liberal Summer School, Cambridge.

OMICRON.

INDIAN DANCE

WHEN they had pitched their smoked tepees
In horse-shoe curve upon the plain,
I strolled into the Indian camp—
And straightway was a boy again.
The years between were crumbled dust;
A dream of youth had come to pass:
I smoked a calumet with five
Tall red men in the sun-dried grass.
Yet coming back to Now and Town,
Interrogated where I'd been,
"Just looking at the Indian camp,"
I said, with most nonchalant mien.
For who believes in miracle?
Or why proclaim so much as half
Our happy lunacies to one
Who would, not understanding, laugh?
But there was deeper miracle
At night, when stars and fires were lit
And wind-borne rhythms came to Town
As though to cast a spell on it.
Out to the Indian camp I went—
And far beyond my boyhood then:
Greece was not dreamt; Rome had not been:
Young wonder filled the hearts of men.
There's something lost in organ-peals
Or witchery of violins;
These Indians had not quite forgot
Who danced in deer-skin moccasins.
Where had I heard these lilts before,
That plaintive cry, that dying fall?
Or did they but remind me of
The wind in trees, a wild-fowl's call?
It seemed I knew it all of old,
So long ago the world was young
When to such drum-throbs once I danced
And heard these weird cadenzas sung.
There was a moon I marvelled at;
There was a new and clamant shore;
Dark eyes looked questioning in mine
A million years ago and more.
Back through a million years and more
I crept, but tom-toms in my brain
Still pulsed through tattered memories,
To Now and Town returned again.
"Where have you been to all this time?"
How could I tell? 'Twas best perchance
To counterfeit a yawn and say:
"Just looking at the Indian dance."

FREDERICK NIVEN.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

MODERN ART

"THE New Interior Decoration," by Dorothy Todd and Raymond Mortimer (Batsford, 21s.), is a book which claims one's interest from several different directions. This is a rare quality in any book, but rarest of all in what are called "Art Books." To anyone who has the bad—or possibly good—fortune not to be an expert or connoisseur, Art Books have an extremely limited interest. The illustrations are sometimes beautiful, but the mind rapidly becomes fogged and such æsthetic sensibility as one may possess paralyzed by the desultory inspection of a large number of half-tone illustrations of pictures, pots, or statues. The letterpress of Art Books generally seems to me (who have no right to express an opinion) inferior to the letterpress of novels or economic books, two classes which are usually considered to be the worst written and least intelligent products of the human mind; the writers in most cases seem to think that the English language contains a certain number of ordinary words like "is," "has," or "and," but otherwise consists of jargon, clichés, and words from which every vestige of precise meaning has evaporated until they are now merely the shrivelled and desiccated skins of what were once nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The plastic artist, to judge from biographies, letters, and the few attempts of painters to explain the mysteries of their art, is rarely able to use such intellectual powers as he must be assumed, as a human being, to possess. There may be good reason for this. It may well be that if you use that part of the brain which in ordinary life produces reason and intelligence, you cannot paint great pictures; but, even if this be true, it does not warrant the further assumption that those who write about pictures should not use their reason and intelligence.

Miss Todd and Mr. Mortimer have produced a book in which the letterpress is as interesting as the illustrations. It is full of ideas, reason, intelligence. A good many of the ideas and statements are of what may be called "doubtful validity," but actually it is a merit in this kind of book that it should make one ejaculate "O no," and want to argue with the authors. Their subject is, indeed, considerably wider than is indicated by their title. Their illustrations include not only modern interior decoration of rooms, but also to some extent modern external architecture. This was inevitable, because the interior of a house partly determines its exterior and is partly determined by it, and internal decoration, if it is to have character and to be successful, cannot be separated from either the architecture or the architect. For instance, the interiors of the rooms by Le Corbusier or Djo Bourgeois, including the shape of the armchairs and tables, could not be properly appreciated, if our authors had not also provided us with admirable photographs of the exteriors of the houses and villas built by these distinguished architects. The authors argue—and the illustrations support their argument—that there is developing a modern style of interior decoration of great vitality and artistic creativeness because it is "a characteristic product of our civilization," and not a mere pastiche of dead or moribund types. The book is particularly welcome because practically all that is being done in the new style is being done on the Continent, and few people in England are aware that the

modern architect has produced anything better than the new Regent Street or the modern decorator anything more vital than the furniture which Mr. and Mrs. Everyman purchase from the generous Mr. Drage.

* * *

The characteristics of this modern style may be seen at once in the work of its perhaps most distinguished and uncompromising exponent, Le Corbusier. The buildings, externally and internally, the decoration, and the furniture of this architect all belong to the machine age in which we are now living. In every case the form is determined primarily by utility and by the material used; his house is the *machine à habiter*, the machine for living in, built of concrete. The simplicity of the architecture is repeated in the simplicity and austerity of the decoration and furniture. These characteristics occur again and again in the work of the Continental artists, represented in this book, the Frenchmen Djo Bourgeois and Lurçat, the Dutch Mart Stam, the German Gropius, and the Belgian Victor Bourgeois. Their influence has spread to America where it can be seen, in a somewhat modified form, in the work of Paul Nelson and William E. Lescage. It is clear that this movement has behind it real vitality and genuine artistic impulse, and that it is arguable that it is proceeding on the right lines because it deliberately seeks direction and inspiration from the contemporary Zeitgeist or "spirit of the age." Nothing better than mutton will ever come out of a dead sheep, and the artist who goes for his inspiration to dead art will never produce anything better or more alive than the artistic equivalent of cold mutton. You can see it being produced all over the place in England by "distinguished" architects and decorators and furniture makers whose buildings are pastiches of "Tudor," "Georgian," &c., and whose chairs and tables are "artistic" because they remind their purchasers vaguely of words like Sheraton or Chippendale. One can therefore agree with the authors of this book when they maintain that there is infinitely more life and promise in the school of Le Corbusier and Mart Stam than in that, let us say, of Sir Edward Lutyens. Whether the Continental school is quite so successful in artistic achievement as the authors seem to claim, is much more doubtful. It is true that genuine art must probably always spring directly from the spirit of the age, but the age may be one in which the spirit is unable to produce art of the highest quality. With all their merits, there are symptoms in the houses and furniture of Le Corbusier and the others which give one an uncomfortable feeling of *fin de siècle* rather than of renaissance.

* * *

A word must be said of the startling difference between the work of this Continental school and that of the few English decorators represented in this book. The illustrations show that there are one or two artists in England who are producing very beautiful interior decoration. But their art is the antithesis of that of the modern Continental school. It has its roots in the past even though its flowers and fruit belong to the present. It seems to have no connection at all with the machine age, for when it decorates a gramophone it obliterates it as a machine and puts in its place a fantasy. It is ornate, decorative, romantic.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

MYSTERY AT THE MILL

Rod and Line. By ARTHUR RANSOME. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

If the war had been fought, as the "troops" used to say, with bladders on sticks, there would have been little serious fault to find with it as a summer sport; and if angling did not mean the (perfectly affable) fixing of hooks in the mouths of fishes—again to quote old times, "the result is death which is often fatal"—then everybody would be an angler. There is no limit to the art, mystery, and surprise of angling. I stood, an evening or two ago, watching a young man with a rod, who had sat for hours with no result beside a canal noisy with motor-barges in and out of the lock. Incidentally, too, whenever it occurred to them, passing boys threw stones in—the largest they could find. The angler was about to pack up. Suddenly, he and I saw the water's surface crowded with fish. He threw in carelessly with about six inches of line from float to hook. Out came a perch, another, another. Twenty in a few minutes. The shoals around did not trouble to move. He dropped his line under them, and turned them over like puppies. They stayed. They indulged him by catching themselves. And then, *finis*.

Mr. Ransome, who collects fifty of his fishing essays from the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, has recorded even more fantastic ichthyology in his exact, flowing, and often brilliant prose. Fishing with a minnow in the Lune one autumn day, he first of all observed a kind of "mad dance" of great fish stirred up by his invitation. Then a salmon took his minnow, and began fighting for life. A larger salmon apparently attempted a rescue. He circled round the line and then "let himself be swept broadside on against the cast immediately above my salmon's head," thus putting his weight on the cast—but in vain. Frank Buckland's training? Mr. Ransome describes another curious occurrence, with which perhaps we may most of us remember some parallel. He hooks a carp. This, as carp well know, is the height of impertinence, and the offender sees "the fine gut cast parting above the float." Mr. Ransome proceeds:—

"There then occurred an incident that illustrates the uncanny nature of these fish. My float, lying out in the middle of the pond, turned and sailed slowly in again to my very feet, towed by the monster who then in some manner freed himself, thus returning me my tackle with a sardonic invitation to try again."

Whatever else may be felt or said on fishing, the certainty is that catching fish is not the beginning and end of the argument. A rod and line are capital substitutes for the scallop-shell of quiet; with these as his chief logical support, a man may soon enter into a region which he would otherwise have been likely to miss. The life of our rivers is worth knowing, and the steady angler with something of Mr. Ransome's sensitive readiness for various experience is admitted to that knowledge. He will seldom be able to express what he discovers as Mr. Ransome does. One or two examples of Mr. Ransome's waterside imagination and felicity will show this; indeed, here is a passage just to our hand:—

"There is no such thing as a blank fishing day for the fisherman. It will be saved for him by the white-throated weasel, who watches his fishing from a hole in the stone wall under which is lying a fish that refused all flies; or by the excitement of identifying insects; or by the apple-blossom in a near-by orchard; and no one could call that day a blank on which he has seen a kingfisher."

One's recollections of the sudden apparition of big fish in unexpected surroundings are always hard to utter with the proper significance. The reviewer, once, curiously creeping down to a backwater below an old and gloomy arch, was struck with amazement and primitive fear on seeing there a pike, almost as long as himself. It was not merely the alligator-like shape of this goblin. It was the sudden contact with an inhuman kind of intelligence. But Mr. Ransome should have been there, to chronicle the feeling as finely as he does for other occasions:—

"This pond was square and used for washing sheep. There was a little wooded island in it and a sunken willow tree. Its banks were almost without bushes. It was simply a shallow bath-tub of a pond. It had not even water-lilies.

It looked as if it had no fish. When I came to the pond-side, I believed I had been misled and was consoled by watching a flock of wild Canada Geese resting beside it. For some minutes they took no notice of me; then, all together, twelve or thirteen of them, they raised their long black necks and, a moment later, rose into the air, cleared the hedge and, lifting slowly, flew away. I was still watching them when I heard something like a cart-wheel fall into the pond. Huge rings showed, even on the wind-swept surface. I watched for a particularly clumsy diving bird to come up again. None came, but, just as a gleam of sunshine opened the racing clouds, there was another vast splash and a huge, pale gold fish rose into the air, shook himself in a cloud of spray, gilded by the sunshine and his own colour in the midst of it, and fell heavily back into the water."

E. B.

JOHN KNOX

John Knox: Portrait of a Calvinist. By EDWIN MUIR. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

It is the characteristic function of contemporary biography to explain, not to describe. The fame of national heroes is popularly sustained by a recital of their deeds, but if men are famous for their actions they may often be infamous in their motives. The modern critical mind, cool, analytic, realistic and sceptical, will not accept greatness at its face value. There is nowadays much expert digging at the base of accepted idols, and in most cases the analyst's report indicates neither clay nor gold, but a dubious and durable amalgam. The issue is increasingly inconclusive: the idol only rocks, it does not fall.

John Knox, and the way Mr. Muir deals with him, is a very interesting example of this process. Mr. Muir's book is full of the thunder of Knox's voice and the loud, arrogant scratching of his pen. In life that voice went on and on, prophesying, admonishing, cajoling, cursing, wearing down friend and foe alike, and leaving, in the end, nothing to its author but gloom, power and triumph. Its detonations are terrific even to-day, but Mr. Muir, unlike those who shuddered under Knox's pulpit or bent before him in council, is temperamentally exempt from their blasting terrors. Listening grimly and at his leisure to this astonishing noise, he has two tasks to perform. The first is to dissect the noise itself, the second is to assess its power over Knox's associates and show how, by means of it, Knox welded the forces against Mary of Guise and Mary Stuart and brought Puritanism to vigorous birth in Scotland. Mr. Muir's study is an unequal one because the analytical part of his work is on an altogether higher level than the narrative. His description of the long, complicated, and romantic struggle between the Protestant nobility and the Crown is too dry and detached to be satisfying, or even to give an adequate picture of Knox's organizing, stiffening influence amid the shifting treacheries of those turbulent years. Again, in his summary of the constitution of the Scottish Church he lays stress on the narrowness and bigotry of its outlook. No doubt in one aspect the Kirk was a society excellently adapted for mutual censure, envy, and repression. But its zeal for education and its invigorating and even liberating influence on the mentality of the Scots peasant and laird were benefits to which Mr. Muir gives too little weight. As for the type of godliness which Knox set up in Scotland, Mr. Muir is content to say that it ruined the prospects of the Renaissance there and produced a crop of mad prophets and debased covenanters when England was producing Shakespeare. This is true, but there is a powerful time-lag in the sequence of historical events, and if Mr. Muir had gone a century further his conclusion might have been less grim.

But if Mr. Muir's account of what Knox did is not entirely convincing, his analysis of why he did it is remarkable for a deadly precision and subtlety. The Knox of this study is a man of frail constitution and timid instincts who was possessed by a terrible drive for power. He was violent, and prone to anger, envy, and malice. He could not bear to be in the wrong, and until his conversion to Calvinism there was nothing to put him eternally in the right and resolve the conflict between his vehement will and the lack of means to enforce it. But, as Mr. Muir shows in a chapter which is a masterly summary of Puritan ideas, Calvinism might have been made for Knox. Once he was certain of

his election, once he knew that his enemies were, *ipso facto*, eternally damned and that victory preordained was his as an instrument of God, the power of his subtle wits, his eloquence, and his enormous tenacity were unbounded. In yielding himself to God he made God his instrument. Thenceforward, if he could not get his way with a queen (and three thwarted him) he would prophesy against her. He rose to noble heights of courage and endurance, he gave way to godly explosions of rage and curses and incitements to treason and murder. Not only Jehovah, but all the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament were at his hand as exemplars of policies of holy violence. In time, as success hardened him, anything that he wished to believe in became good by thinking on it. He was that most dangerous of honest men, the unconscious self-deceiver, and as such the Scottish nobles, who were treacherous and knew it, used him to lend righteousness to their shifts between Mary and Elizabeth. So he spoke his formidable mind in and out of season: "In the opening up of his text he was moderate for the space of a half-hour, but when he entered into the application he made me so to grue and tremble that I could not hold a pen to write. He behaved to lean at his first entry, but or he had done with his sermon, he was so active and vigorous, that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads and fly out of it." That is a description of one of his last sermons, when he could scarcely move.

Such, in outline, is what Mr. Muir makes of Knox. The thunder, when analyzed, has revealed a mental state which borders on the pathological. Mr. Muir sticks close to his facts, and if at times, when facts fail, his sense of grim irony takes charge, the portrait which he paints is consistent and convincing. It might have been a different portrait if something material were known of Knox the Catholic, Knox the husband and father. As things are, there may be an answer to Mr. Muir's arguments, but only one man could furnish it, and if he could speak now we should certainly be treated to "A First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Critics."

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A NEW PHASE IN INDIA

The Remaking of Village India. By F. L. BRAYNE, M.C., I.C.S.
(Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press. 5s.)

Socrates in an Indian Village. By F. L. BRAYNE, M.C., I.C.S.
(Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.)

THESE two books describe an experiment of great interest and immense possibilities. Mr. Brayne, who was in charge of a district a few miles from Delhi, has combined with his ordinary administrative work an attempt to reform village life, and in doing so has waged an active war against the less desirable customs and social observances of the Hindu peasant. There have, of course, been many instances of Englishmen in Government service who have undertaken the regeneration of backward races in India—men like Outram with his Bhils, or in modern times Mr. Starte with his criminal tribes. Such men have, however, usually worked amongst those who are outside the Hindu social system, and there has been a tradition against interfering in the village life of India as being too intimately bound up with religion. The field has thus been left to the missionaries, but their sphere of activity is very limited, and in practice they also have worked almost entirely amongst the lowlier castes. Mr. Brayne has made a great advance by showing that in an ordinary agricultural district it is possible to get support from the people themselves for an intensive campaign in favour of better living and better farming, although it runs counter to many recognized Hindu customs and ideas.

Undoubtedly better village life is bound up intimately with any hope of improvement in peasant farming. To take a simple but important example. Most Indian agricultural land is starved for want of manure, but in every village there are masses of filth, most of which has considerable manurial value, lying about and wasted. The collection and utilization of village ordure requires a new outlook on ceremonial cleanliness, and on the question of village servants. Again there are many parts in India where the women spend much of their time making cow-dung into cakes, which they use for cooking. This is a disgusting habit which degrades the women while it starves the fields. Thus the farmyard is closely bound up with female education and the proper position of women. Similarly child marriage can be shown to be as economically wasteful as it is morally unsound. Along such practical lines as these, Mr. Brayne, helped by his wife, has carried on an active and effective propaganda in the villages of his district. His method of approach is best illustrated by a typical quotation from "Socrates in an Indian Village":—

"SOCRATES: When your cow is going to calve whom do you call?

"VILLAGERS: A sensible *zamindar*, of course.

"SOCRATES: When your wife is going to have a baby whom do you send for?

"VILLAGERS: The sweeper's wife, or the Chumar's.

"SOCRATES: The lowest and dirtiest class of woman in the village?"

Perhaps the most encouraging part of the experiment is that Mr. Brayne has been able to enlist a number of helpers from the educated classes, and that these have co-operated enthusiastically in working such English institutions as a Rural Community Council, Boy Scouts, and Women's Institutes. Time lies very heavily on the hands of the Indian cultivator, and his small plot of land seldom occupies him for more than a few months in the year. The remaking of the villages must depend chiefly on persuading the *ryot* to utilize this spare time in making his village a better place for his wife and children, and Mr. Brayne is undoubtedly right in starting with the village as a unit. It is an old and partly just complaint that the English did nothing to stop the decay in village life, and the breakdown of the *panchayat* system. If something of this village spirit can be revived and turned into new channels the benefit to India would far exceed anything that the politicians can do. Mr. Brayne does well to be guardedly optimistic. It is possible that Gurgaon, with its rather backward Meos, is not a typical area. Certainly there are parts of India, like the Deccan, in which more opposition would be expected upon religious grounds to his whole-hearted attacks upon

the caste system. It is also possible that the ryot, when he finds his village swept and garnished, may allow other devils to take the place of sloth, carelessness, and fatalism. The reforms seem a little too secular to be permanent, but they mark a very important move in the right direction.

G. T. GARRATT.

ITALY

A History of Italy. By BENEDETTO CROCE. (Clarendon Press. 15s.)

Italy. By LUIGI VILLARI. (Benn. 18s.)

BOTH these books would be classed in the publishers' lists as History, yet both derive their chief interest not from the past, but the present, and will probably appeal rather to the politician than the scholar. Professor Croce concludes his preface with the words:—

"I have brought my story to an end in 1915, on the entry of Italy into the world war, because the period which opens at that date is still open, and, for that very reason, it belongs not to the domain of the historian, but to that of the politician; and never willingly would I vitiate historical research by confusing it with party politics. Political war will continue to be waged, and it is right that it should be waged, but the place for it is not here."

Signor Villari's comment on p. 365 of his own book ("A History of Italy" was published in Italian last year) is "his (i.e., Croce's) recent history of Italy is more a piece of propaganda than an historical essay."

Again, "Italy," by Luigi Villari, is one of the Modern World series, which is edited by the Warden of New College, and the "puff" opposite the title page announces that "The aim of the volumes in this series is to provide a balanced survey, with such historical illustrations as are necessary, of the tendencies and forces, political, economic, intellectual, which are moulding the lives of contemporary States." Signor Villari is an official in the Italian Foreign Office, and readers of THE NATION will doubtless recollect the many able letters which he has written to this paper in defence of his Government and the existing regime in Italy.

To put it more plainly, the two books under notice are both of them the work of advocates, not of judges. Signor Villari in the last half of his book quite openly comes out as the counsel for the defence; Professor Croce, who still lives in Naples protected from violence by his international reputation, is too discreet to indulge in open prosecution, but by his defence of Giolitti and Italian Liberalism before the war implies a criticism of Mussolini which is none the less effective because it is indirect.

Granted that we are dealing with propaganda, and not with history as the word is generally understood, both books are excellent of their kind. Professor Croce, imaginative, vivid, intelligent, seems to have been admirably translated by Miss Ady. Signor Villari, painstaking and loyal, can dispense with translators and write English, doubtless owing to his English mother, which is at times delightful, and always readable. The case on both sides is well presented; the jury of English readers may be relied upon to disagree, and it would be presumptuous of a reviewer to arrogate to himself the privileges of a modern judge. His duty, too often forgotten, is to indicate the nature of the books entrusted to him and to act, to the best of his ability, as a "tipster." On this principle I would recommend Signor Villari's book to sound Conservatives, whom it will certainly delight—on p. 329 the MORNING POST is invoked as a witness to the contentment of the German inhabitants of the Alto Adige—and Professor Croce's to convinced Liberals, particularly if they still believe in *laissez-faire*, who will be pleased with the opening of a chapter on "Liberal Government and Economic Expansion (1901-1910)," which reads: "Italian life after 1900 had overcome the chief obstacles in its course, and, confining itself within the channels imposed upon it, flowed on for the next ten years and more, rich both in achievement and in hope." To the detached my advice would be to read both or neither of these books.

Briefly, to sum up the case on each side, Professor Croce maintains that Italian politics had emerged from the artificial and depressing condition into which it had lapsed after

1870, under the leadership of Giolitti: that Coercion and Socialism had both failed, and that under Liberalism the country was achieving an intellectual and economic success (during the five years 1896 to 1900 Italy's foreign trade averaged 2,622 million lire, and in 1910 it amounted to 5,326 million lire), which proves the success of the old regime. Signor Villari regards the successive political phases and Ministries between 1870 and 1922 as so many unsuccessful experiments at making Italy into a great Power, and the present Fascist State as the culmination of those experiments and the realization of their ideal.

Professor Croce shows an intimate knowledge of the period of which he writes: Signor Villari, a younger man, tends to be dry and statistical in his earlier chapters, which deal with the pre-war period, and blossoms out into genuine enthusiasm when he extols the Fascist regime.

After reading the last eight chapters of "Italy," particularly that entitled "The New Foreign Policy," I am more apprehensive of Italy as a danger to the peace of the world than ever before. Such comments as those on the "Fuorisciti," or Italian refugees, in Paris, who include distinguished men like Signor Nitti, betray a bitterness of party feeling which could only be paralleled in Russia; and remarks slipped out like that on the attitude of Fascismo towards Catholicism, "which it respects on account of its national character," or "Italy has no intention of occupying Albania, which would involve heavy expense and be of no use to her," suggest a mentality which, as much for its naïveté as its Jingoism, recalls not Machiavelli, but the Prussian Junkers of 1913.

It is true that trains run faster and that the Fiat factory is admired even in Detroit, it is true that in Signor Mussolini (guided by Professor Gentile) Plato might have found the philosopher-king of whom he dreamt in his old age: it is also true that Mazzini and Garibaldi, and probably Galileo, if they were alive to-day, would have been exiles in Paris or prisoners in the Sicilian Islands. But liberty, like Liberalism, is out of fashion nowadays.

BASIL MURRAY.



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ALEXANDER AND AORNOS

On Alexander's Track to the Indus. By SIR AUREL STEIN, K.C.I.E. (Macmillan. 21s.)

To the North of the North West Frontier Province of India, in the fork of the Swat-Kabul rivers and the Indus, lies a country which, owing to the turbulence of its people and the looseness of the native Governments, has long been closed to the European traveller. Thanks to the friendship of the present ruler, Miangul Gul-Shahzada, who has reduced the tribes to something like order and is acknowledged as Badshah of Swat, Buner, and Torwal, it has been the good fortune of Sir Aurel Stein with the assistance of the Government of India to visit this country and to look upon scenes which since the last Macedonian outpost was withdrawn have not been seen by European eyes. Sir Aurel's mission was threefold. He was engaged upon a geographical survey; on the tracing of the ancient Buddhist sites—ruined witnesses of the past splendours of Buddhism in Swat which the famous Chinese pilgrims have recorded; and, last but not least, upon an investigation of Alexander's campaign in Swat with a view to the discovery of the sites of cities and fortresses he besieged and captured.

In his discussion of the topography of this campaign Sir Aurel relies mainly on the cautious Arrian, with occasional references to Curtius and Diodorus. The site of Massaga, "the greatest city of those parts," which fell to Alexander after a four days' siege, is left for future investigation, none of the historians giving a topographical clue; though from the economic importance of the town Sir Aurel conjectures that it lay in a rich, fertile, and thickly populated country, and that its site must be sought in Lower Swat. For the rest he was more fortunate. On both topographical and philological grounds he is able to identify Bazara—the Beira of Curtius—with the ancient stronghold marked by the ruins on Bir-Kot hill. Bazara, we are told, was a strongly garrisoned and fortified city which was held by a containing force while Alexander laid siege to Ora. After the fall of Ora, Bazara was evacuated in the night. Ora, Sir Aurel identifies with Ude-gram, and again the philological and topographical evidence is conclusive.

These discoveries, important as they are, are, however, eclipsed by Sir Aurel's discovery of Aornos, that great natural rock fastness to which the warriors of Swat fled after the fall of Bazara and Ora. Here the stories of Arrian, Curtius, and Diodorus march with Sir Aurel's discoveries. Never was identification more scientific, though its basis again is mainly topographical and philological. The archaeological evidence, the discovery of an ancient ruined fort on the high plateau, is apparently corroborative; but even if it fails to render evidence of Macedonian occupation, the identification of "the rock," that Heracles himself found impregnable, will stand. Aornos, as described by the historians, is a natural rather than a fortified stronghold. It is said to consist of a plateau, fertile and watered, and presumably wooded, situated on a mountain spur with precipitous sides with only one path of access, and that easily defended. On one side the Indus laved its cliffs. The detailed story of the siege tells how Alexander filled with tree trunks a ravine which separated Aornos from a neighbouring height so that his engines of war could be brought to bear upon the besieged. Just such a mountain spur as the historians describe, Sir Aurel discovered in a bend of the Indus; with fertile wooded plateau one and a half miles long and from 100 to 200 yards wide, and with precipitous sides rising some 6,000 feet above the Indus. The spur is named Pir-sar, and across a—the-ravine it is faced by the Una-sar, another height which not only corresponds with the historians' account, but in its name of Una, anciently Avarna, gives just the philological clue needed. The "rock," famous in legend when Alexander captured it, and no doubt used more than once in the long, hidden pre-history of "Indian" invasion, should repay excavation for which, of course, Sir Aurel had neither time nor opportunity.

This great discovery is the most important described by Sir Aurel; but the book is packed with interest, geographical, ethnological, and historical; is superbly illustrated with reproductions of photographs; and contains maps which are models of their kind.

TWO MODERNS

Poems, 1929. By ROBERT GRAVES. (The Seizin Press, 35A, St. Peter's Square, Hammersmith, London. 8s. 6d.)

Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing. By SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

To a tendency prevalent nowadays in the criticism of poetry, suavely to applaud the second-rate and with some foolish phrase to dismiss that which cannot be immediately and effortlessly apprehended, the literary sensitiveness, acumen, and profundity of Mr. Graves's criticism (such as, for example, the chapters on Cummings in the "Survey of Modernist Poetry") are an invigorating antidote; while of those "younger" Georgian poets whom we now begin to see in better perspective, Mr. Robert Graves is perhaps the one who remains the most creative, vital, and alert. With him poetry is what it should be, a genuine *accident*, a "spell of furious power." He does not "pen" trite lyrics, but says things he is compelled to say—despondent, angry words, sometimes, in a tone that reminds one of Hardy, but with a feeling finer even than Hardy's for tautness and muscularity of texture. Notice in this new book the poem "In No Direction"; the firmness of the nouns and adverbs, the absence of adjectives. This poem is also a good example of a mood that seems common with him:—

"To go in no direction
Surely as carelessly
Walking on the hills alone
Was never found easy."

The heights which Mr. Graves reached with "Sullen Moods," "Essay on Knowledge," and "Virgil the Sorcerer," are an altitude whose air is not so often breathed in modern verse. It is not altogether certain whether we breathe it in "Poems, 1929," but we climb high. The three poems, "Between Dark and Dark," "A Dismissal," and "Against Kind," stand with some of his best work; they appear to be barometric of the mental weather in which he is enveloped. "The Tow Path" is characteristic of Mr. Graves the modernist, Georgian still vigilant enough to experiment in words:—

"Art introduced him
To females dull and bad,
Flapper flappings, limb-slim,
From his blonde writing-pad,
The river-girlgling drained of blood—
Post-card flower of kodak mud."

On the other hand, "Guessing Black or White" looks like verbal legerdemain of a comparatively valueless kind. The book is delightfully printed and bound in smooth green—a credit to the enterprising Seizin Press.

Mr. Samuel Hoffenstein turns his light-verse couplets with considerable skill. His fecundity is remarkable. At times he is quite Drydenesque. "Psalm" is throughout a sprightly satirical piece:—

"High in His holy spires sits the Lord;
He is the bell, the clapper and the cord,
And, taller than the haughty traffic towers,
He sprinkles chimes on the congested hours; . . .
Benign and Undenominational,
His benisons from myriad bellfries fall;
No special steeples His affections hold,
And styles of architecture leave Him cold;
The stately Gothic in the city fogs,
The shingle Baptist in the rural bogs,
The tricky Moorish, surly Muscovite,
Are equally His dwellings and delight."

"Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing" are what their title suggests. Mr. Hoffenstein's light verse is of a high average quality, inspired by a gentle cynicism which is (generally) amusing.

NOVELS IN BRIEF

Jill Came Tumbling. By MARY BLAKER. (Thornton Butterworth. 7s. 6d.)

This is a lightheaded story about a girl of fifteen, named Jill, who falls in love with Jim, her brother-in-law, the widower of her half-sister. But Jim is infatuated with Lady Diana. An unsuccessful novelist, he is about to give up his career to accept a well-paid job in America. But Jill is determined to keep him at home, make a success of him, and put Lady Di to rout. This she manages in a series of harum-scarum exploits to do. Mrs. Blaker must be given credit for having attempted a study of adolescence, but her story is too preposterous even to be really amusing.

The Man Within. By GRAHAM GREENE. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

The action of this novel takes place in Sussex, at the beginning of the last century. The smuggler, Andrews, betrays his comrades to the revenue officers. They vow his death. In pursuit of him, one of them kills his mistress, Elizabeth. To redeem himself, he confesses to the crime. On this plan, Mr. Greene has written a psychological-adventure story, somewhere between Stevenson and Conrad. The

main fault on the adventure side is Andrews' betrayal of the smugglers. It seems improbable that he would have chosen this method of freeing himself from the misery of his life with them, not because it was the most dishonourable, but because it was the most hazardous. But then, there would have been no story. While it is possible to believe in each of the characters separately, it is difficult to believe in them in their connection with one another. Andrews and Carlyon, for example, are each fairly credible. The former is cowardly and sentimental, which he attributes to the influence of his father, a gross bully. The latter is wise and silver tongued, a lover of books. But a certain incongruous "missishness," or cultured "young manishness," pervades their relationship. It is also hard to realize how Elizabeth came to fall in love with Andrews. However, Andrews, in himself, is a really good piece of work. Mr. Greene knows something about writing. His dialogue is, perhaps, too modern.

Sweet Charlatan. By INEZ HOLDEN. (Duckworth. 7s. 6d.)

This is "an intimate story of the modern Esthetes in London Society, in which satire and romance are very delicately blended." But Miss Holden's novel is not quite like that, although one of her women is called Rose Leaf and another Autumn Dorn. Autumn marries Cedric, a decadent wit, in the hope of making something of him; but he is hopeless. She leaves him, and he takes refuge with Rose. Miss Holden's people have no reality in themselves. But they have a kind of reality through the force of her reflections and her words (although she writes badly); and, with this reality, they can arouse fairly strong emotions in the reader. Cedric is almost a humour, in the Elizabethan sense, the humour of vanity; and this makes him incredibly simple and naive, which is not, perhaps, what Miss Holden meant him to be. But there is no more proof of Cedric's wit than there is reason for Rose's mysteriousness, and that is a radical fault. It is strange that Miss Holden, who has some pretensions to the subtle and the exquisite, should write so badly. The second page, for instance, is as good a specimen of bad writing as it would be possible to find in a serious modern novel. It is choked with trite expressions and jingling adverbs. On page 47, the handling of the singulars "any" and "someone" is even less fortunate than it need be with these difficult words. It spoils the effect of an original passage. While "sinister regard," on page 131, is not English at all.

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REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE "Nineteenth Century" opens with the first part of an essay on Socialism, by Stewart L. Murray. There is also "A National Policy," by L. Haden Guest. In the "Fortnightly" we have, "A Socialist Looks Ahead," by Roger Chance, and in the "Contemporary Review" there is "Parliamentary Prospects," by F. Kingsley Griffith. So much for information and speculation caused by the change of Government. In Foreign Affairs, America holds the field with "President Hoover and Europe," by S. K. Ratcliffe, as the leading article in the "Contemporary Review," and "Anglo-American Relations: A Reply," by "Caribbean," as the leading article in the "Fortnightly."

"In British judgments of the American President," says Mr. Ratcliffe, "... too much stress is laid upon his Quaker origins and his humanitarian services in Europe. Both are important, but they may easily be made the ground of misleading inference. Mr. Hoover is a very modern American, an economic imperialist, with a profound belief in organization and in the coming world dominance of the United States. He is, of course, an internationalist, but his internationalism has very little in common with Mr. MacDonald's, or with the Pacifist doctrine of the Society to which by birthright he belongs. His conception of the United States as the inevitably dominant Power presupposes a world at peace, although not 'politically' organized to that end. His experience in Europe and among Governments generally has made him impatient of the influences that keep the nations at enmity, and his engineer's mind is intolerant of all waste."

The "Contemporary Review" has an article on "The South African General Election," by P. A. Molteno, and the "Nineteenth Century" has "Native Policies in White Africa," by J. de G. Delmege.

But the most interesting article, to many people, in the "Nineteenth Century" this month will be Lord Brentford's apologia for the late actions of "Jix" in the "Censorship

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of Books." His article has a wistful, almost bewildered tone which is rather disarming:—

"... No sooner, however, was a book published which made some pretensions to literary merit than I was told that other considerations applied, that the law ought not to have been invoked against it, and that the Home Secretary and the Director of Public Prosecutions were conspiring to stifle genius. I was pictured as a narrow-minded Puritan zealot, forbidding by Ministerial decree the publication of a book which happened to outrage his personal sensibilities. Let me explain the policy and practice I followed at the Home Office; and it will, of course, be obvious that nothing I say here can be understood as pledging my successor to adopt a similar course. . . . Literary excellence may be a sufficient justification to certain critics and reviewers for preferential treatment, but there are, after all, other matters of importance in life besides the free development of a particular form of art."

The whole article is well worth reading.

The "Mask" contains "A Letter on Recent Travels through Europe," by Gordon Craig, a Catalogue of the Possessions of Rachel, and reproductions of two fine seventeenth-century drawings of the Amphitheatre of Arles. There is the usual hard hitting to North, South, East, and West, and the usual complete doubt in the mind of the reader as to whether the "Mask" will be violently for or violently against any given opinion. This, when the attitude of every other paper on every subject can be gauged for all futurity by the reading of a single copy, is refreshing.

The fifth number of the "Realist" is well up to the high standard this paper has already set. Wickham Steed writes on "Minds Across the Sea"; Harold Jeffreys concludes his series of essays on "The Future of the Earth," and G. Lowes Dickinson contributes "Goethe's View of Nature."

The "New England Quarterly" has a pleasant article on Matthew Arnold called "The Apostle of Culture meets America," by J. D. McCallum.

The "Antiquaries' Journal" contains the Anniversary Address of the President, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres; a Report of Recent Excavations in London by E. B. Birley, and an article on the Bronze Forepart of an Ibe of Mesopotamian origin, with a beautiful photograph, by H. R. Hall.

The "British Museum Quarterly" contains among other interesting items an illustrated article on "Ceramic Acquisitions from the Near East."

The "International Labour Review," the organ of the International Labour Office, has "The Functions of the International Labour Organization," by J. Oudegeest. F. W. v. Bülow writes in the same paper on "Social Aspects of Agrarian Reform in Latvia." The Reports and Inquiries section contains a particularly interesting examination into the number of women employed in Agriculture in Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia.

The "Quarterly Review," celebrating its five hundredth number has to pause in the midst of self-congratulatory reminiscences to try once more to put itself right with the world over that bad business of Keats.

AUCTION BRIDGE

By CALIBAN.

THE RECORDER OF LIVERPOOL ON CHANCE

I WANT to return this week to the subject of Chance, on which I have already written one or two articles. It is, however, evident that its possibilities are not yet exhausted.

A *confrère*, if I may so call him, writing in the SUNDAY TIMES of June 30th under the name of Yarborough, makes the following observation:—

"The order of importance of the three elements of Bridge is cards, calling, and play. Good cards depend on luck, while calling and play depend on skill. Play, although not so important as calling, is a deciding factor on many occasions when a game is in the balance. A good player would succeed where a moderate player would fail to make game."

This is obviously an unexceptionable statement—provided it is taken as referring to a particular hand. But it is possibly open to misinterpretation. There are many regular players of Bridge who believe that Yarborough's assertion, that "the order of importance . . . is cards, calling, and play," applies, not to a single hand, but to *their career at cards taken as a whole*. They are mostly members of that

great undying army, the "bad card-holders," of whose outlook and philosophy I have more than once written in these columns.

A formidable recruit to this school of thought has recently appeared in the shape of the Recorder of Liverpool. The case of *Rex v. The O.K. Social and Whist Club, Ltd.*, was decided on June 24th in the Court of Criminal Appeal. This was an appeal by the Club from a conviction at Liverpool City Sessions of keeping a common gaming house.

What were the facts? The Club "in addition to other amenities" provided "nightly whist drives for members." There was no suggestion that these drives were not properly conducted. But the Recorder held that whist as played—"progressive whist, where the players were shuffled as well as the cards"—was illegal, on the ground that to play the game in this way eliminates the element of skill.

Now as I understand the position, the Court of Criminal Appeal can only concern itself with questions of law and has no jurisdiction in regard to questions of fact. All that the Lord Chief Justice and his colleagues had to decide was whether the Recorder was within his rights in pronouncing "progressive whist" an illegal game. They decided that he was. "Unless a whole series of authorities were to be overruled, it was not possible to say that there had been any error in law." But the wording of this decision suggests that the Court may have appreciated what an extraordinary decision in itself that of the Recorder is. An excellent judge, no doubt, his knowledge of the laws of probability is evidently limited; and perhaps it is a defect in our law that it assumes, in our judiciary, infallibility in regard to technical questions of this kind.

What was the Recorder's view? As summarized by the Lord Chief Justice, it was this: "That this game of progressive whist, involving as it did at every turn the element of chance and multiplying and confusing the element of chance by the progression of the partners throughout the evening, was not a game of skill, and that it was an unlawful game." If that is so, I should think it reasonable to infer that Bridge as played in every West-End club is equally an unlawful game. The phrase "multiplying and confusing the element of chance" has no intelligible meaning. The participant in a progressive whist drive may, it is true, have a different partner and different adversaries every rubber, but so may I in my club. That does not alter the fact that, if I play markedly better than most of those whom I play with, I am bound, in the long run, to win; and if I play markedly worse I am bound to lose. "How can you eliminate chance from any game of cards?" pertinently asked Mr. Justice Swift. The answer, of course, is that if there is any element of skill in the game at all you eliminate the element of chance by playing the game for a sufficiently long period.

I am not an habitual progressive whist player, but I would lay odds that, among progressive whist players chosen at random, I should be up on points at the end of an evening's play. I would lay considerably longer odds that I should be up at the end of a week's play. And I would lay 10,000 to 1, if such a bet were worth while, that I should be up on points at the end of a year. Why? Because over such a period the element of chance eliminates itself. To talk about its "multiplication" is to misapprehend the laws that govern its behaviour. It does not, as the Recorder supposes, "multiply" itself at all; it divides itself by infinity and disappears.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

DEPRESSION—NEW YORK DRAIN—HOME RAILS—BRITISH CELANESE—FURNESS WITHY

STILL greater "losses" of gold (the biggest daily shipment "ever" was recorded on Tuesday with the sale of £2,860,000, mainly to France), a cotton stoppage, a reaction in New York, holidays, and business stagnation—what can the Stock Exchange do but mark down prices in anticipation of further selling? The nervous holder of securities opens his paper each morning to see how much he has "lost" since yesterday. Gilt-edged stocks have been thoroughly depressed by the anticipation this week of a higher Bank rate. In a month Consols 4 per cent. have fallen by $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $81\frac{1}{2}$, Conversion $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by 1 15-16 to $74\frac{1}{2}$, Funding 4 per cent. by 1 3-16 to $85\frac{1}{2}$, and only 5 per cent. War Loan with the help of two months accrued interest has risen 1-16 to 100 11-16. The running yield on 5 per cent. War Loan is now 5 per cent., and we see little chance of the Government, however much it wants to reduce the cost of Government borrowing, being able to exercise its option to repay this £2,000 million debt for some years. In the industrial share market such a sound ordinary share holding as Babcock and Wilcox has fallen from 73s. 6d. this year to 62s. 1½d., which returns a yield of £6 1s. 3d. gross on the established basis of 15 per cent. tax free dividends. There are many more examples of market exhaustion. The more patient holders of securities, however, take comfort from the thought that some time the cotton crisis will be settled, that sooner or later New York will "boom again," that holidays come to an end, and that the gold drain will probably cease as soon as the readjustment of the Paris money market is complete. It seems at present that, the Bank of France not being a ready purchaser of foreign bills, the French banks are being forced to convert their foreign balances into francs by drawing gold from abroad.

A good deal of the recent activity on the New York Stock Exchange has been due to the offering of new shares to stockholders by leading corporations. This, in turn, has attracted business from London for a peculiar reason. The American speculator generally buys the new shares because he does not have to pay for them immediately. The result is that the new shares rise to a premium as compared with the old so that the more cautious London investor with money available finds that he can buy the old shares and sell the new simultaneously to give him a clear profit. This has happened in the case of United Gas Improvement Company, and we believe it is still possible to buy the old shares and sell the new of this Company to give a profit of about 9 per cent. on the investment if the new shares are issued, as expected, about September 24th. The same opportunity will probably arise with the Middle West Utilities Company, which is offering new shares to stockholders and splitting its stock. In a sense the operation we have described is a form of lending money to the New York Stock Exchange. We do not believe that there is any general exodus of funds from London to New York—certainly not as a result of the fall in sterling—but there is no doubt that the New York Stock Exchange is attracting in a normal fashion and for a period an increasing amount of investment money from London. Perhaps this is what Lord Rothermere means when he asks: "Will Wall Street swallow Europe?"

The hackneyed expression "pleasant surprise" was heard on all sides in the home railway market when the following interim dividends were published:—

	L.M.S.		G.W.		Southern	
	1928	1929	1928	1929	1928	1929
Interim	...	1½%	2%	1½%	2½%	2½%
Final	...	2½%	3½%	2½%	2½%	2½%

It is clear that the home railway market did not take the trouble to estimate the savings which were likely to be effected as a result of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. cut in wages and salaries which came into force last August. This cut

enabled the L.M. & S. to save £540,000 in the half year, L. & N.E. £400,000, and G. Western £230,000. The half year's railway results as compared with the first half of 1928, work out as follows:—

	L.M. & S.	L. & N.E.	G.W.	Southern
Rail Receipts	£519,000	£163,000	£204,000	£240,000
Rail Economies	£1,200,000	£617,000	£630,000	£350,000
Total	£681,000	£780,000	£834,000	£28,000*

* After allowing for miscellaneous receipts.

The higher interim dividends have not prevented the market from declining. The notice of the railwaymen to terminate in November next the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. wages cut agreement has naturally prevented cheerfulness from going far. If the L.M. & S. paid 5 per cent. for the year and G.W. 7 per cent.—both possibilities—the dividend yields at the present market price of $51\frac{1}{2}$ and $85\frac{1}{2}$ would be, for L.M. & S., 9.64 per cent., and for G.W., 8.20 per cent. The L. & N.E. announced that it was postponing a dividend on its second preference stock until after the end of the year, as it did in 1928, but if the increase in receipts and the savings which it has effected in the first half are continued in the second it should be able to pay its preference dividends comfortably, and leave a much bigger surplus on its preferred ordinary than it did in 1928. At $52\frac{1}{2}$ L. & N.E. second preference stock returns a yield of 7.66 per cent.

Frankly, what the Stock Exchange has never liked about British Celanese is the chairman's bluff. In October, 1927, when an issue of convertible debentures was made, Dr. Dreyfus stated that when the plant to treble the 1927 output was in operation, profits would average £400,000 a month, or £4,800,000 a year. In 1928 this plant was completed, but it was not put into full operation because the output could not be sold. Next comes the report for the year ended February 28th, 1929, which disclosed net profits before depreciation of only £326,910, a decline of 62 per cent. from the previous year's figure of £864,889. After deducting £200,000 for depreciation (against £378,261 a year ago), the earnings available for distribution are only £108,156. Yet the first preference dividends in a full year require £112,000 and the second preference £255,000. It seems extraordinary that the half year's dividends due on the first and second preference shares on April 30th should have been paid this year, but the directors have announced that since March sales and monthly profits have steadily increased in spite of "unfavourable conditions in the textile trade." Is it the hope of this progress continuing that has decided the directors to defer the shareholders' meeting until September 18th? The financial year in future is to end on June 30th, so that next year's accounts will cover a period of sixteen months. The 10s. shares, far removed as ever from the dividend stage, are still commanding a big premium.

	Highest	To-day	Yield	Yield with
	1928	102	6.89%	Red. (1942)
Brit. Cel. 7% 1st deb. ...	108½			7.30%
Do. 7½% 2nd mtge. ...				
convert. deb. ...	118	94	8.02%	9.76% (Red. 1937)
Do. 7% 1st. pref. (£1)	19/3½	14/0	10.05%	
Do. 7½% 2nd pref. (£1)	19/7½	15/3	10.03%	
Do. Ord. (10s.)	6 13-16	1 3-16	—	

The complete contrast between light and darkness is to be found in the speech of Sir Frederick Lewis at the general meeting of Furness Withy and the reluctance of Lord Kysant to supply details of the Royal Mail affairs. Furness Withy and Company separates its assets into various sections so that it may be seen to what extent its capital is invested in shipping and to what extent outside. Its shipping property amounts to £5,148,877, and its investments in British funds and other securities to £3,244,168. Hence it could increase its earnings in a year when shipping profits were declining. This is in all respects a model which the Royal Mail might well copy.

